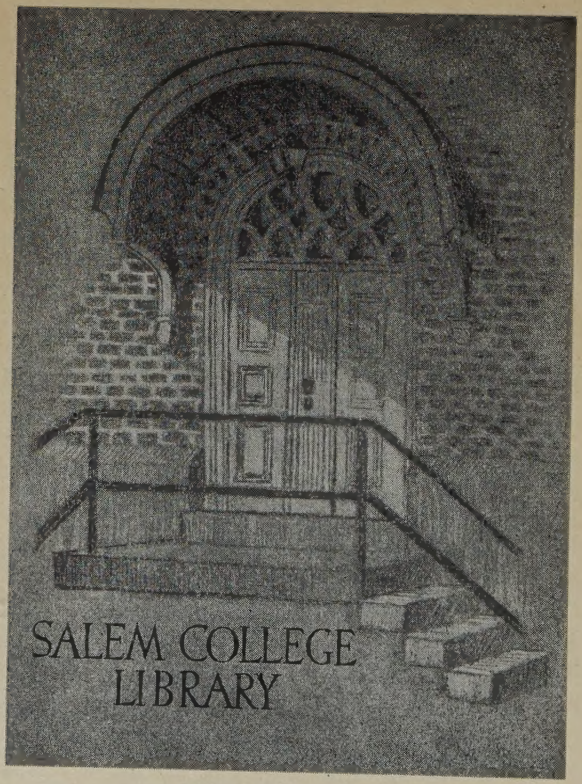
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*BIOGRAPHICAL EDITION*

# THE LETTERS OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

EDITED BY

SIDNEY COLVIN

A NEW EDITION REARRANGED IN FOUR VOLUMES
WITH 150 NEW LETTERS

VOL. III

1887-1891

THE ADIRONDACKS—PACIFIC VOYAGES—FIRST YEAR AT VAILIMA

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# THE LETTERS OF R. L. STEVENSON

## IX

## THE UNITED STATES AGAIN

### WINTER IN THE ADIRONDACKS

AUGUST 1887–JUNE 1888

THE letters printed in the following section are selected from those which tell of Stevenson's voyage to New York and reception there at the beginning of September 1887; of his winter's life and work at Saranac Lake, and of his decision taken in May 1888 to venture on a yachting cruise in the South Seas.

The moment of his arrival at New York was that when his reputation had first reached its height in the United States, owing to the popularity both of *Treasure Island* and *Kidnapped*, but more especially to the immense impression made by the *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.* He experienced consequently for the first time the pleasures, such as they were, of celebrity, and also its inconveniences; found the most hospitable of refuges in the house of his kind

friends, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Fairchild, at Newport; and quickly made many other friends, including the late Augustus St. Gaudens, the famous sculptor, with Mr. C. Scribner and Mr. E. L. Burlingame, the owner and the editor of Scribner's Magazine, from whom he immediately received and accepted very advantageous offers of work. Having been dissuaded from braving for the present the fatigue of the long journey to Colorado and the extreme rigour of its winter climate, he determined to try instead a season at Saranac Lake in the Adirondack Mountains, New York State, which had lately been coming into reputation as a place of cure. There, under care of the well-known resident physician, Dr. Trudeau, he spent nearly seven months, from the end of September 1887 to the end of April 1888, with results on the whole favourable to his own health, though not to that of his wife, which could never support these winter mountain cures. On the 16th of April, he and his party left Saranac. After spending a fortnight in New York, where, as always in cities, his health quickly flagged again, he went for the month of May into seaside quarters at Union House, Manasquan, on the New Jersey coast, for the sake of fresh air and boating. Here he enjoyed the occasional society of some of his New York friends, including Mr. St. Gaudens and Mr. W. H. Low, and was initiated in the congenial craft of cat-boat sailing. In the meantime, Mrs. Stevenson had gone to San Francisco to see her relatives; and holding that

the climate of the Pacific was likely to be better for the projected cruise than that of the Atlantic, had inquired there whether a yacht was to be hired for such a purpose. The schooner *Casco*, Captain Otis, was found. Stevenson signified by telegraph his assent to the arrangement; determined to risk in the adventure the sum of £2000, of which his father's death had put him in possession, hoping to recoup himself by a series of Letters recounting his experiences, for which he had received a commission from Mr. S. S. M'Clure; and on the 2nd of June started with his mother and step-son for San Francisco, the first stage on that island cruise from which he was destined never to return.

His work during the season September 1887–May 1888 had consisted of the twelve papers published in the course of 1888 in Scribner's Magazine, including perhaps the most striking of all his essays, *A Chapter on Dreams*, *Pulvis et Umbra*, *Beggars*, *The Lantern Bearers*, *Random Memories*, etc.; as well as the greater part of the *Master of Ballantrae* and *The Wrong Box*—the last originally conceived and drafted by Mr. Lloyd Osbourne.

## To Sidney Colvin

A succession of Stevenson's friends had visited and spent part of the day or the evening with him at Armfield's hotel on Sunday, August 20th, each bringing some farewell gift or another (as related by Mr. Gosse in his volume *Critical Kitcats*, p. 297). Among these, Mr. Henry James's gift had been a case of champagne for consumption during the journey. On the morning of the 21st I accompanied him to the docks, saw him and his party embarked on board the steamer *Ludgate Hill*, a vessel sailing from the port of London and carrying animals and freight as well as passengers. They had chosen to go by this route for the sake alike of economy and amusement, rather than by one of the sumptuous lines sailing from Liverpool or Southampton. Leaving the ship's side as she weighed anchor, and waving farewell to the party from the boat which landed me, I little knew what was the truth, that I was looking on the face of my friend for the last time. The letters next following were written during or immediately after his passage across the Atlantic. 'The Commodore' is of course R. L. S.

*H.M.S.* Vulgarium, *off Havre de Grace, this 22nd day of August* [1887]

SIR,—The weather has been hitherto inimitable. Inimitable is the only word that I can apply to our fellow-voyagers, whom a categorist, possibly premature, has been already led to divide into two classes—the better sort consisting of the baser kind of Bagman, and the worser of undisguised Beasts of the Field. The berths are excellent, the pasture swallowable, the champagne of H. James (to recur to my favourite adjective) inimitable. As for the Commodore, he slept awhile in the evening, tossed off a cup of Henry James with his plain meal, walked the deck till eight, among sands and floating lights and buoys and wrecked brigantines, came down (to his regret) a minute too soon to see Margate lit up, turned in about nine, slept, with some interruptions, but on the whole sweetly, until six, and has already walked

a mile or so of deck, among a fleet of other steamers waiting for the tide, within view of Havre, and pleasantly entertained by passing fishing-boats, hovering sea-gulls, and Vulgarians pairing on deck with endearments of primitive simplicity. There, sir, can be viewed the sham quarrel, the sham desire for information, and every device of these two poor ancient sexes (who might, you might think, have learned in the course of the ages something new) down to the exchange of head-gear.—I am, sir, yours,

BOLD BOB BOLTSPRIT

B. B. B. (*alias* the Commodore) will now turn to his proofs. Havre de Grace is a city of some show. It is for-ti-fied; and, so far as I can see, is a place of some trade. It is situ-ated in France, a country of Europe. You always complain there are no facts in my letters.

R. L. S.

## TO SIDNEY COLVIN

*Newport, R.I., U.S.A.* [*September* 1887]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—So long it went excellent well, and I had a time I am glad to have had; really enjoying my life. There is nothing like being at sea, after all. And O, why have I allowed myself to rot so long on land? But on the Banks I caught a cold, and I have not yet got over it. My reception here was idiotic to the last degree. . . . It is very silly, and not pleasant, except where humour enters; and I confess the poor interviewer lads pleased me. They are too good for their trade; avoided

anything I asked them to avoid, and were no more vulgar in their reports than they could help. I liked the lads.

O, it was lovely on our stable-ship, chock full of stallions. She rolled heartily, rolled some of the fittings out of our state-room, and I think a more dangerous cruise (except that it was summer) it would be hard to imagine. But we enjoyed it to the masthead, all but Fanny; and even she perhaps a little. When we got in, we had run out of beer, stout, cocoa, soda-water, water, fresh meat, and (almost) of biscuit. But it was a thousandfold pleasanter than a great big Birmingham liner like a new hotel; and we liked the officers, and made friends with the quartermasters, and I (at least) made a friend of a baboon (for we carried a cargo of apes), whose embraces have pretty near cost me a coat. The passengers improved, and were a very good specimen lot, with no drunkard, no gambling that I saw, and less grumbling and backbiting than one would have asked of poor human nature. Apes, stallions, cows, matches, hay, and poor men-folk, all, or almost all, came successfully to land.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

## To Henry James

[*Newport, U.S.A., September* 1887]

MY DEAR JAMES,—Here we are at Newport in the house of the good Fairchilds; and a sad burthen we have laid upon their shoulders. I have been in bed practically ever since I came. I caught a cold on

the Banks after having had the finest time conceivable, and enjoyed myself more than I could have hoped on board our strange floating menagerie: stallions and monkeys and matches made our cargo; and the vast continent of these incongruities rolled the while like a haystack; and the stallions stood hypnotised by the motion, looking through the ports at our dinner-table, and winked when the crockery was broken; and the little monkeys stared at each other in their cages, and were thrown overboard like little bluish babies; and the big monkey, Jacko, scoured about the ship and rested willingly in my arms, to the ruin of my clothing; and the man of the stallions made a bower of the black tarpaulin, and sat therein at the feet of a raddled divinity, like a picture on a box of chocolates; and the other passengers, when they were not sick, looked on and laughed. Take all this picture, and make it roll till the bell shall sound unexpected notes and the fittings shall break loose in our state-room, and you have the voyage of the *Ludgate Hill*. She arrived in the port of New York, without beer, porter, soda-water, curaçoa, fresh meat, or fresh water; and yet we lived, and we regret her.

My wife is a good deal run down, and I am no great shakes.

America is, as I remarked, a fine place to eat in, and a great place for kindness; but, Lord, what a silly thing is popularity! I envy the cool obscurity of Skerryvore. If it even paid, said Meanness! and was abashed at himself.—Yours most sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## To Sidney Colvin

[*New York, end of September* 1887]

MY DEAR S. C.,—Your delightful letter has just come, and finds me in a New York hotel, waiting the arrival of a sculptor (St. Gaudens) who is making a medallion of yours truly and who is (to boot) one of the handsomest and nicest fellows I have seen. I caught a cold on the Banks; fog is not for me; nearly died of interviewers and visitors, during twenty-four hours in New York; cut for Newport with Lloyd and Valentine, a journey like fairy-land for the most engaging beauties, one little rocky and pine-shaded cove after another, each with a house and a boat at anchor, so that I left my heart in each and marvelled why American authors had been so unjust to their country; caught another cold on the train; arrived at Newport to go to bed and to grow worse, and to stay in bed until I left again; the Fairchilds proving during this time kindness itself; Mr. Fairchild simply one of the most engaging men in the world, and one of the children, Blair, *aet.* ten, a great joy and amusement in his solemn adoring attitude to the author of *Treasure Island.*

Here I was interrupted by the arrival of my sculptor.—I withdraw calling him handsome; he is not quite that, his eyes are too near together; he is only remarkable looking, and like an Italian cinque-cento medallion; I have begged him to make a medallion of himself and give me a copy. I will not take up the sentence in which I was wandering so long, but be-

gin fresh. I was ten or twelve days at Newport; then came back convalescent to New York. Fanny and Lloyd are off to the Adirondacks to see if that will suit; and the rest of us leave Monday (this is Saturday) to follow them up. I hope we may manage to stay there all winter. I have a splendid appetite and have on the whole recovered well after a mighty sharp attack. I am now on a salary of £500 a year for twelve articles in Scribner's Magazine on what I like; it is more than £500, but I cannot calculate more precisely. You have no idea how much is made of me here; I was offered £2000 for a weekly article—eh heh! how is that? but I refused that lucrative job. The success of *Underwoods* is gratifying. You see, the verses are sane; that is their strong point, and it seems it is strong enough to carry them.

A thousand thanks for your grand letter.—Ever yours,

R. L. S.

## To W. E. Henley

The verses herein alluded to were addressed to Rossetti's friend, Dr. Gordon Hake, physician and poet (1809–1895), in return for some received from him. They are those beginning 'In the beloved hour that ushers day' and printed as No. xix. in *Songs of Travel.*

*New York* [*September* 1887]

MY DEAR LAD,—Herewith verses for Dr. Hake, which please communicate. I did my best with the interviewers; I don't know if Lloyd sent you the result; my heart was too sick: you can do nothing with them; and yet —— literally sweated with anxiety to please, and took me down in long hand!

I have been quite ill, but go better. I am being not busted, but medallioned, by St. Gaudens, who is a first-rate, plain, high-minded artist and honest fellow; you would like him down to the ground. I believe sculptors are fine fellows when they are not demons. O, I am now a salaried person, £600 a year,[1] to write twelve articles in Scribner's Magazine; it remains to be seen if it really pays, huge as the sum is, but the slavery may overweigh me. I hope you will like my answer to Hake, and specially that he will.

Love to all.—Yours affectionately,

R. L. S.
(*le salarié*)

## To R. A. M. Stevenson

*Saranac Lake, Adirondacks,*
*New York, U.S.A.* [*October* 1887]

MY DEAR BOB,—The cold [of Colorado] was too rigorous for me; I could not risk the long railway voyage, and the season was too late to risk the Eastern, Cape Hatteras side of the steamer one; so here we stuck and stick. We have a wooden house on a hill-top, overlooking a river, and a village about a quarter of a mile away, and very wooded hills; the whole scene is very Highland, bar want of heather and the wooden houses.

I have got one good thing of my sea voyage: it is proved the sea agrees heartily with me, and my mother likes it; so if I get any better, or no worse, my mother will likely hire a yacht for a month or so in summer.

[1] For the actual sum see pp. 13, 14.

Good Lord! What fun! Wealth is only useful for two things: a yacht and a string quartette. For these two I will sell my soul. Except for these I hold that £700 a year is as much as anybody can possibly want; and I have had more, so I know, for the extry coins were for no use, excepting for illness, which damns everything.

I was so happy on board that ship, I could not have believed it possible. We had the beastliest weather, and many discomforts; but the mere fact of its being a tramp-ship gave us many comforts; we could cut about with the men and officers, stay in the wheel-house, discuss all manner of things, and really be a little at sea. And truly there is nothing else. I had literally forgotten what happiness was, and the full mind—full of external and physical things, not full of cares and labours and rot about a fellow's behaviour. My heart literally sang; I truly care for nothing so much as for that. We took so north a course, that we saw Newfoundland; no one in the ship had ever seen it before.

It was beyond belief to me how she rolled; in seemingly smooth water, the bell striking, the fittings bounding out of our state-room. It is worth having lived these last years, partly because I have written some better books, which is always pleasant, but chiefly to have had the joy of this voyage. I have been made a lot of here, and it is sometimes pleasant, sometimes the reverse; but I could give it all up, and agree that —— was the author of my works, for a good seventy ton schooner and the coins to keep her on. And to think there are parties with yachts

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who would make the change! I know a little about fame now; it is no good compared to a yacht; and anyway there is more fame in a yacht, more genuine fame; to cross the Atlantic and come to anchor in Newport (say) with the Union Jack, and go ashore for your letters and hang about the pier, among the holiday yachtsmen—that's fame, that's glory, and nobody can take it away; they can't say your book is bad; you *have* crossed the Atlantic. I should do it south by the West Indies, to avoid the damned Banks ; and probably come home by steamer, and leave the skipper to bring the yacht home.

Well, if all goes well, we shall maybe sail out of Southampton water some of these days and take a run to Havre, and try the Baltic, or somewhere.

Love to you all—Ever your afft.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## To Sir Walter Simpson

It was supposed that Stevenson's letters to this friend, like those to Professor Fleeming Jenkin, had been destroyed or disappeared altogether. But here is one which turns out to have been preserved by a friend to whom Sir Walter made a present of it.

[*Saranac Lake, October* 1887]

MY DEAR SIMPSON,

the address is

c/o Charles Scribner's Sons,

243 Broadway, N. Y.,

where I wish you would write and tell us you are better. But the place of our abode is Saranac Lake in the Adirondacks; it is a mighty good place too,

and I mean it shall do me good. Indeed the dreadful depression and collapse of last summer has quite passed away; it was a thorough change I wanted; I wonder perhaps if it wouldn't pick you up—if you are not picked up already; you have been a long time in Great Britain; and that is a slow poison, very slow for the strong, but certain for all. Old Dr. Chepmell told Lloyd: any one can stay a year in England and be the better for it, but no one can stay there steadily and not be the worse.

I have had a very curious experience here; being very much made of, and called upon, and all that; quite the famous party in fact: it is not so nice as people try to make out, when you are young, and don't want to bother working. Fame is nothing to a yacht; *experto crede.* There are nice bits of course; for you meet very pleasant and interesting people; but the thing at large is a bore and a fraud; and I am much happier up here, where I see no one and live my own life. One thing is they do not stick for money to the Famed One; I was offered £2000 a year for a weekly article; and I accepted (and now enjoy) £720 a year for a monthly one: $\frac{720}{12}$ (whatever that may be) for each article, as long or as short as I please, and on any mortal subject. I am sure it will do me harm to do it; but the sum was irresistible. See calculations on verso of last page, and observe, sir, the accuracy of my methods.

Hulloh, I must get up, as I can't lose any time. Good-bye, remember me to her ladyship and salute the Kids.—Ever your friend,

R. L. S.

12 : 10 :: 72 : $x$, and this results in the same problem. Well—tackle it.

12)720(60
72

Is it possible?

£60 !!??

Let us cheque it by trying it in dollars, $3500 per an.

12)3500(291.80
24
110
108
20

Well : $291.80

then divide by 5 for a rough test

5)291(58. 4. 4
25
add 80 cents=40d.=3. 4d.
3. 4
£58. 7. 8

Well, call it

£58. 10.

and be done with it!

## To Edmund Gosse

The following refers to a review by Mr. Gosse of Stevenson's volume of verse called *Underwoods*. The book had been published a few weeks previously, and is dedicated, as readers will remember, to a number of physicians who had attended him at sundry times and places.

*Saranac Lake, Oct. 8th* 1887

MY DEAR GOSSE,—I have just read your article twice, with cheers of approving laughter. I do not

believe you ever wrote anything so funny: Tyndall's 'shell,' the passage on the Davos press and its invaluable issues, and that on V. Hugo and Swinburne, are exquisite; so, I say it more ruefully, is the touch about the doctors. For the rest, I am very glad you like my verses so well; and the qualities you ascribe to them seem to me well found and well named. I own to that kind of candour you attribute to me: when I am frankly interested, I suppose I fancy the public will be so too; and when I am moved, I am sure of it. It has been my luck hitherto to meet with no staggering disillusion. 'Before' and 'After' may be two; and yet I believe the habit is now too thoroughly ingrained to be altered. About the doctors, you were right, that dedication has been the subject of some pleasantries that made me grind, and of your happily touched reproof which made me blush. And to miscarry in a dedication is an abominable form of book-wreck; I am a good captain, I would rather lose the tent and save my dedication.

I am at Saranac Lake in the Adirondacks, I suppose for the winter: it seems a first-rate place; we have a house in the eye of many winds, with a view of a piece of running water—Highland, all but the dear hue of peat—and of many hills—Highland also, but for the lack of heather. Soon the snow will close on us; we are here some twenty miles—twenty-seven, they say, but this I profoundly disbelieve—in the woods: communication by letter is slow and (let me be consistent) aleatory; by telegram is as near as may be impossible.

I had some experience of American appreciation;

I liked a little of it, but there is too much; a little of that would go a long way to spoil a man; and I like myself better in the woods. I am so damned candid and ingenuous (for a cynic), and so much of a 'cweatu' of impulse—aw' (if you remember that admirable Leech) that I begin to shirk any more taffy; I think I begin to like it too well. But let us trust the Gods; they have a rod in pickle; reverently I doff my trousers, and with screwed eyes await the *amari aliquid* of the great God Busby.

I thank you for the article in all ways, and remain yours affectionately,

R. L. S.

## To W. H. Low

[*Saranac Lake, October* 1887]

SIR,—I have to trouble you with the following *paroles bien senties*. We are here at a first-rate place. 'Baker's' is the name of our house, but we don't address there; we prefer the tender care of the Post-Office, as more aristocratic (it is no use to telegraph even to the care of the Post-Office, who does not give a single damn [1]). Baker's has a prophet's chamber, which the hypercritical might describe as a garret with a hole in the floor: in that garret, sir, I have to trouble you and your wife to come and slumber. Not now, however: with manly hospitality, I choke off any sudden impulse. Because first, my wife and my mother are gone (a note for the latter, strongly

[1] 'But she was more than usual calm,
She did not give a single dam.'
*Marjorie Fleming*

suspected to be in the hand of your talented wife, now sits silent on the mantel shelf), one to Niagara and t'other to Indianapolis. Because, second, we are not yet installed. And because, third, I won't have you till I have a buffalo robe and leggings, lest you should want to paint me as a plain man, which I am not, but a rank Saranacker and wild man of the woods.—Yours,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## To CHARLES FAIRCHILD

*Post Office, Saranac Lake,*
*Adirondacks, N. Y.* [*October* 1887]

MY DEAR FAIRCHILD,—I do not live in the Post Office; that is only my address; I live at 'Baker's,' a house upon a hill, and very jolly in every way. I believe this is going to do: we have a kind of a garret of a spare room, where hardy visitors can sleep, and our table (if homely) is not bad.

And here, appropriately enough, comes in the begging part. We cannot get any fruit here: can you manage to send me some grapes? I told you I would trouble you, and I will say that I do so with pleasure, which means a great deal from yours very sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

*P.S.*—Remember us to all yours: my mother and my wife are away skylarking; my mother to Niagara, my wife to Indianapolis; and I live here to-day alone with Lloyd, Valentine, some cold meat, and four salmon trout, one of which is being grilled at

this moment of writing; so that, after the immortal pattern of the Indian boys, my household will soon only reckon three. As usual with me, the news comes in a P.S., and is mostly folly.

R. L. S.

*P.P.S.*—My cold is so much better that I took another yesterday. But the new one is a puny child; I fear him not; and yet I fear to boast. If the post-script business goes on, this establishment will run out of P's; but I hope it wasn't you that made this paper—just for a last word—I could not compliment you upon that. And Lord! if you could see the ink —not what I am using—but the local vintage! They don't write much here; I bet what you please.

R. L. S.

## To William Archer

The Wondrous Tale referred to in the following is Stevenson's *Black Arrow*, which had been through Mr. Archer's hands in proof.

*Saranac Lake, October* 1887

DEAR ARCHER,—Many thanks for the Wondrous Tale. It is scarcely a work of genius, as I believe you felt. Thanks also for your pencilings; though I defend 'shrew,' or at least many of the shrews.

We are here (I suppose) for the winter in the Adirondacks, a hill and forest country on the Canadian border of New York State, very unsettled and primitive and cold, and healthful, or we are the more bitterly deceived. I believe it will do well for me; but must not boast.

My wife is away to Indiana to see her family; my

mother, Lloyd, and I remain here in the cold, which has been exceeding sharp, and the hill air, which is inimitably fine. We all eat bravely, and sleep well, and make great fires, and get along like one o'clock.

I am now a salaried party; I am a *bourgeois* now; I am to write a weekly paper for Scribner's, at a scale of payment which makes my teeth ache for shame and diffidence. The editor is, I believe, to apply to you; for we were talking over likely men, and when I instanced you, he said he had had his eye upon you from the first. It is worth while, perhaps, to get in tow with the Scribners; they are such thorough gentlefolk in all ways that it is always a pleasure to deal with them. I am like to be a millionaire if this goes on, and be publicly hanged at the social revolution: well, I would prefer that to dying in my bed; and it would be a godsend to my biographer, if ever I have one. What are you about? I hope you are all well and in good case and spirits, as I am now, after a most nefast experience of despondency before I left; but indeed I was quite run down. Remember me to Mrs. Archer, and give my respects to Tom.—Yours very truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## To W. E. Henley

'Gleeson White' in this letter means the collection of *Ballades, Rondeaus, &c.*, edited by that gentleman and dedicated to R. L. S. (Walter Scott, 1887).

[*Saranac Lake, October* 1887]

MY DEAR LAD,—I hear some vague reports of a success [1] at Montreal.

My news is not much, my mother is away to Niagara and Fanny to Indiana; the Port Admiral and I and Valentine keep house together in our verandahed cottage near a wood. I am writing, and have got into the vein. When I got to N. Y. a paper offered me £2000 a year to do critical weekly articles for them; the sum was so enormous that I tottered; however, Scribner at once offered me the same scale to give him a monthly paper in his magazine; indeed it is rather higher, £720 for the twelve papers. This I could not decently refuse; and I am now a yoked man, and after a fit of my usual impotence under bondage, seem to have got into the swing. I suppose I shall scarce manage to do much else; but there is the fixed sum, which shines like a sun in the firmament. A prophet has certainly a devil of a lot of honour (and much coins) in another country, whatever he has in his own.

I got Gleeson White; your best work and either the best or second best in the book is the Ballade in Hot Weather; that is really a masterpiece of melody and fancy. Damn your Villanelles—and everybody's. G. Macdonald comes out strong in his two

[1] Of the play *Deacon Brodie*.

pious rondels; *Fons Bandusiæ* seems as exquisite as ever. To my surprise, I liked two of the Pantoums, the blue-bottle, and the still better after-death one from *Love in Idleness*. Lang cuts a poor figure, except in the Cricket one; your patter ballade is a great *tour de force*, but spoiled by similar cæsuras. On the whole 'tis a ridiculous volume, and I had more pleasure out of it than I expected. I forgot to praise Grant Allen's excellent ballade, which is the one that runs with yours,—and here, to the point, a note from you at Margate—among East Winds and Plain Women, damn them! Well, what can we do or say? We are only at Saranac for the winter; and if this *Deacon* comes off, why you may join us there in glory; I would I had some news of it. Saranac is not *quite* so dear, in some ways, as the rest of this land, where it costs you a pound to sneeze, and fifty to blow your nose; but even here it costs $2·50 to get a box from the station! Think of it! Lift it up tenderly! They had need to pay well! but how poor devils live; and how it can pay to take a theatre company over to such a land, is more than I can fancy. The devil of the States for you is the conveyances, they are so dear—but O, what is not!

I have thrown off my cold in excellent style, though still very groggy about the knees, so that when I climb a paling, of which we have many, I feel as precarious and nutatory as a man of ninety. Under this I grind; but I believe the place will suit me. Must stop.—Ever affectionately,

R. L. S.

## To Henry James

The 'dear Alexander' mentioned below is Mr. J. W. Alexander, the well-known American artist, who had been a welcome visitor to Stevenson at Bournemouth, and had drawn his portrait there. The humorous romance proceeding from Mr. Osbourne's typewriter was the first draft of *The Wrong Box;* or, as it was originally called, *The Finsbury Tontine*, or *The Game of Bluff*. The article by Mr. Henry James referred to in the last paragraph is one on R. L. S. which had appeared in the Century Magazine for October, and was reprinted in *Partial Portraits*.

[*Saranac Lake, October* 1887] I know not the day; but the month it is the drear October by the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

MY DEAR HENRY JAMES,—This is to say *First*, the voyage was a huge success. We all enjoyed it (bar my wife) to the ground: sixteen days at sea with a cargo of hay, matches, stallions, and monkeys, and in a ship with no style on, and plenty of sailors to talk to, and the endless pleasures of the sea—the romance of it, the sport of the scratch dinner and the smashing of crockery, the pleasure—an endless pleasure—of balancing to the swell: well, it's over.

*Second*, I had a fine time, rather a troubled one, at Newport and New York; saw much of and liked hugely the Fairchilds, St. Gaudens the sculptor, Gilder of the Century—just saw the dear Alexander—saw a lot of my old and admirable friend Will Low, whom I wish you knew and appreciated—was medallioned by St. Gaudens, and at last escaped to

*Third*, Saranac Lake, where we now are, and which I believe we mean to like and pass the winter

at. Our house—emphatically 'Baker's'—is on a hill, and has a sight of a stream turning a corner in the valley—bless the face of running water!—and sees some hills too, and the paganly prosaic roofs of Saranac itself; the Lake it does not see, nor do I regret that; I like water (fresh water I mean) either running swiftly among stones, or else largely qualified with whisky. As I write, the sun (which has been long a stranger) shines in at my shoulder; from the next room, the bell of Lloyd's typewriter makes an agreeable music as it patters off (at a rate which astonishes this experienced novelist) the early chapters of a humorous romance; from still further off—the walls of Baker's are neither ancient nor massive—rumours of Valentine about the kitchen stove come to my ears; of my mother and Fanny I hear nothing, for the excellent reason that they have gone sparking off, one to Niagara, one to Indianapolis. People complain that I never give news in my letters. I have wiped out that reproach.

But now, *Fourth*, I have seen the article; and it may be from natural partiality, I think it the best you have written. O—I remember the Gautier, which was an excellent performance; and the Balzac, which was good; and the Daudet, over which I licked my chops; but the R. L. S. is better yet. It is so humorous, and it hits my little frailties with so neat (and so friendly) a touch; and Alan is the occasion for so much happy talk, and the quarrel is so generously praised. I read it twice, though it was only some hours in my possession; and Low, who got it for me from the Century, sat up to finish it

ere he returned it; and, sir, we were all delighted. Here is the paper out, nor will anything, not even friendship, not even gratitude for the article, induce me to begin a second sheet; so here, with the kindest remembrances and the warmest good wishes, I remain, yours affectionately,

R. L. S.

## To Charles Baxter

[*Saranac Lake*], 18*th November* 1887

MY DEAR CHARLES,—No likely I'm going to waste a sheet of paper. . . . I am offered £1600 ($8000) for the American serial rights on my next story! As you say, times are changed since the Lothian Road. Well, the Lothian Road was grand fun too; I could take an afternoon of it with great delight. But I'm awfu' grand noo, and long may it last!

Remember me to any of the faithful—if there are any left. I wish I could have a crack with you.—Yours ever affectionately,

R. L. S.

I find I have forgotten more than I remembered of business. . . . Please let us know (if you know) for how much Skerryvore is let; you will here detect the female mind; I let it for what I could get; nor shall the possession of this knowledge (which I am happy to have forgot) increase the amount by so much as the shadow of a sixpenny piece; but my females are agog.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

## To Charles Scribner

Shortly after the date of the present correspondence Stevenson, to his great advantage, put all his publishing arrangements (as he had already put his private business) into the hands of his friend Mr. Baxter. Meantime he was managing them himself; and an occasional lapse of memory or attention betrayed him once or twice into misunderstandings, and once at least conflicting agreements with two different publishers, both his friends. He was the first to denounce the error when he became aware of it, and suffered sharply from the sense of his own unintentional fault. The next two letters, and some allusions in those which follow, relate to this affair.

[*Saranac Lake, November 20 or 21, 1887*]

MY DEAR MR. SCRIBNER,—Heaven help me, I am under a curse just now. I have played fast and loose with what I said to you; and that, I beg you to believe, in the purest innocence of mind. I told you you should have the power over all my work in this country; and about a fortnight ago, when M'Clure was here, I calmly signed a bargain for the serial publication of a story. You will scarce believe that I did this in mere oblivion; but I did; and all that I can say is that I will do so no more, and ask you to forgive me. Please write to me soon as to this.

Will you oblige me by paying in for three articles, as already sent, to my account with John Paton & Co., 52 William Street? This will be most convenient for us.

The fourth article is nearly done; and I am the more deceived, or it is *A Buster.*

Now as to the first thing in this letter, I do wish to hear from you soon; and I am prepared to hear any reproach, or (what is harder to hear) any for-

giveness; for I have deserved the worst.—Yours sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## To E. L. BURLINGAME

This is the first of many letters, increasing in friendliness as the correspondence goes on, to the editor of Scribner's Magazine.

[*Saranac Lake, November* 1887]

DEAR MR. BURLINGAME,—I enclose corrected proof of *Beggars*, which seems good. I mean to make a second sermon, which, if it is about the same length as *Pulvis et Umbra*, might go in along with it as two sermons, in which case I should call the first 'The Whole Creation,' and the second 'Any Good.' We shall see; but you might say how you like the notion.

One word: if you have heard from Mr. Scribner of my unhappy oversight in the matter of a story, you will make me ashamed to write to you, and yet I wish to beg you to help me into quieter waters. The oversight committed—and I do think it was not so bad as Mr. Scribner seems to think it—and discovered, I was in a miserable position. I need not tell you that my first impulse was to offer to share or to surrender the price agreed upon when it should fall due; and it is almost to my credit that I arranged to refrain. It is one of these positions from which there is no escape; I cannot undo what I have done. And I wish to beg you—should Mr. Scribner speak to you in the matter—to try to get him to see this neglect of mine for no worse than it is: unpar-

donable enough, because a breach of an agreement; but still pardonable, because a piece of sheer carelessness and want of memory, done, God knows, without design and since most sincerely regretted. I have no memory. You have seen how I omitted to reserve the American rights in *Jekyll:* last winter I wrote and demanded, as an increase, a less sum than had already been agreed upon for a story that I gave to Cassell's. For once that my forgetfulness has, by a cursed fortune, seemed to gain, instead of lose, me money, it is painful indeed that I should produce so poor an impression on the mind of Mr. Scribner. But I beg you to believe, and if possible to make him believe, that I am in no degree or sense a *faiseur*, and that in matters of business my design, at least, is honest. Nor (bating bad memory and self-deception) am I untruthful in such affairs.

If Mr. Scribner shall have said nothing to you in the matter, please regard the above as unwritten, and believe me, yours very truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## To E. L. BURLINGAME

[*Saranac Lake, November* 1887]

DEAR MR. BURLINGAME,—The revise seemed all right, so I did not trouble you with it; indeed, my demand for one was theatrical, to impress that obdurate dog, your reader. Herewith a third paper: it has been a cruel long time upon the road, but here it is, and not bad at last, I fondly hope. I was glad

you liked the *Lantern Bearers;* I did, too. I thought it was a good paper, really contained some excellent sense, and was ingeniously put together. I have not often had more trouble than I have with these papers; thirty or forty pages of foul copy, twenty is the very least I have had. Well, you pay high; it is fit that I should have to work hard, it somewhat quiets my conscience.—Yours very truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## To JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS

*Saranac Lake, Adirondack Mountains,*
*New York, U.S.A., November* 21, 1887

MY DEAR SYMONDS,—I think we have both meant and wanted to write to you any time these months; but we have been much tossed about, among new faces and old, and new scenes and old, and scenes (like this of Saranac) which are neither one nor other. To give you some clue to our affairs, I had best begin pretty well back. We sailed from the Thames in a vast bucket of iron that took seventeen days from shore to shore. I cannot describe how I enjoyed the voyage, nor what good it did me: but on the Banks I caught friend catarrh. In New York and then in Newport I was pretty ill; but on my return to New York, lying in bed most of the time, with St. Gaudens the sculptor sculping me, and my old friend Low around, I began to pick up once more. Now here we are in a kind of wilderness of hills and fir-woods and boulders and snow and wooden houses. So far as we have gone the climate is grey and harsh,

but hungry and somnolent; and although not charming like that of Davos, essentially bracing and briskening. The country is a kind of insane mixture of Scotland and a touch of Switzerland and a dash of America, and a thought of the British Channel in the skies. We have a decent house—

*December 6th*—A decent house, as I was saying, sir, on a hill-top, with a look down a Scottish river in front, and on one hand a Perthshire hill; on the other, the beginnings and skirts of the village play hide and seek among other hills. We have been below zero, I know not how far (·10 at 8 A.M. once), and when it is cold it is delightful; but hitherto the cold has not held, and we have chopped in and out from frost to thaw, from snow to rain, from quiet air to the most disastrous north-westerly curdlers of the blood. After a week of practical thaw, the ice still bears in favoured places. So there is hope.

I wonder if you saw my book of verses? It went into a second edition, because of my name, I suppose, and its *prose* merits. I do not set up to be a poet. Only an all-round literary man: a man who talks, not one who sings. But I believe the very fact that it was only speech served the book with the public. Horace is much a speaker, and see how popular! most of Martial is only speech, and I cannot conceive a person who does not love his Martial; most of Burns, also, such as 'The Louse,' 'The Toothache,' 'The Haggis,' and lots more of his best. Excuse this little apology for my house; but I don't like to come before people who have a note of song, and let it be supposed I do not know the difference.

To return to the more important—news. My wife again suffers in high and cold places; I again profit. She is off to-day to New York for a change, as heretofore to Berne, but I am glad to say in better case than then. Still it is undeniable she suffers, and you must excuse her (at least) if we both prove bad correspondents. I am decidedly better, but I have been terribly cut up with business complications: one disagreeable, as threatening loss; one, of the most intolerable complexion, as involving me in dishonour. The burthen of consistent carelessness: I have lost much by it in the past; and for once (to my damnation) I have gained. I am sure you will sympathise. It is hard work to sleep; it is hard to be told you are a liar, and have to hold your peace, and think, 'Yes, by God, and a thief too!' You remember my lectures on Ajax, or the Unintentional Sin? Well, I know all about that now. Nothing seems so unjust to the sufferer: or is more just in essence. *Laissez passer la justice de Dieu.*

Lloyd has learned to use the typewriter, and has most gallantly completed upon that the draft of a tale, which seems to me not without merit and promise, it is so silly, so gay, so absurd, in spots (to my partial eyes) so genuinely humorous. It is true, he would not have written it but for the *New Arabian Nights;* but it is strange to find a young writer funny. Heavens, but I was depressing when I took the pen in hand! And now I doubt if I am sadder than my neighbours. Will this beginner move in the inverse direction?

Let me have your news, and believe me, my dear Symonds, with genuine affection, yours.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## To W. E. Henley

The following refers to a volume on the elder Dumas, which Mr. Henley was at this time preparing to write, and which he proposed to dedicate to his friend.

*Saranac* [*December* 1887]

MY DEAR LAD,—I was indeed overjoyed to hear of the Dumas. In the matter of the dedication, are not cross dedications a little awkward? Lang and Rider Haggard did it, to be sure. Perpend. And if you should conclude against a dedication, there is a passage in *Memories and Portraits* written *at* you, when I was most desperate (to stir you up a bit), which might be quoted: something about Dumas still waiting his biographer. I have a decent time when the weather is fine; when it is grey, or windy, or wet (as it too often is), I am merely degraded to the dirt. I get some work done every day with a devil of a heave; not extra good ever; and I regret my engagement. Whiles I have had the most deplorable business annoyances too; have been threatened with having to refund money; got over that; and found myself in the worst scrape of being a kind of unintentional swindler. These have worried me a great deal; also old age with his stealing steps seems to have clawed me in his clutch to some tune.

Do you play All Fours? We are trying it; it is still all haze to me. Can the elder hand *beg* more

than once? The Port Admiral is at Boston mingling with millionaires. I am but a weed on Lethe wharf. The wife is only so-so. The Lord lead us all: if I can only get off the stage with clean hands, I shall sing Hosanna. 'Put' is described quite differently from your version in a book I have; what are your rules? The Port Admiral is using a game of Put in a tale of his, the first copy of which was gloriously finished about a fortnight ago, and the revise gallantly begun: *The Finsbury Tontine* it is named, and might fill two volumes, and is quite incredibly silly, and in parts (it seems to me) pretty humorous. —Love to all from

AN OLD, OLD MAN

I say, Taine's *Origines de la France Contemporaine* is no end; it would turn the dead body of Charles Fox into a living Tory.

## TO MRS. FLEEMING JENKIN

[*Saranac Lake, December* 1887]

MY DEAR MRS. JENKIN,—The Opal is very well; it is fed with glycerine when it seems hungry. I am very well, and get about much more than I could have hoped. My wife is not very well; there is no doubt the high level does not agree with her, and she is on the move for a holiday to New York. Lloyd is at Boston on a visit, and I hope has a good time. My mother is really first-rate: she and I, despairing of other games for two, now play All Fours out of a gamebook, and have not yet discovered its niceties, if any.

You will have heard, I dare say, that they made a great row over me here. They also offered me much money, a great deal more than my works are worth: I took some of it, and was greedy and hasty, and am now very sorry. I have done with big prices from now out. Wealth and self-respect seem, in my case, to be strangers.

We were talking the other day of how well Fleeming managed to grow rich. Ah, that is a rare art; something more intellectual than a virtue. The book has not yet made its appearance here; the Life alone, with a little preface, is to appear in the States; and the Scribners are to send you half the royalties. I should like it to do well, for Fleeming's sake.

Will you please send me the Greek water-carrier's song? I have a particular use for it.

Have I any more news, I wonder?—and echo wonders along with me. I am strangely disquieted on all political matters; and I do not know if it is 'the signs of the times' or the sign of my own time of life. But to me the sky seems black both in France and England, and only partly clear in America. I have not seen it so dark in my time; of that I am sure.

Please let us have some news; and excuse me, for the sake of my well-known idleness; and pardon Fanny, who is really not very well, for this long silence.—Very sincerely your friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## To Miss Adelaide Boodle

The lady at Bournemouth (the giver of the paper-knife) to whom the following letter is addressed had been trusted to keep an eye on Stevenson's interests in connection with his house (which had been let) and other matters, and to report thereon from time to time. In their correspondence Stevenson is generally referred to as the Squire and the lady as the Gamekeeper.

[*Saranac Lake, December* 1887]

MY DEAR MISS BOODLE,—I am so much afraid our gamekeeper may weary of unacknowledged reports! Hence, in the midst of a perfect horror of detestable weathers of a quite incongruous strain, and with less desire for correspondence than—well, than—well, with no desire for correspondence, behold me dash into the breach. Do keep up your letters. They are most delightful to this exiled backwoods family; and in your next, we shall hope somehow or other to hear better news of you and yours—that in the first place—and to hear more news of our beasts and birds and kindly fruits of earth and those human tenants who are (truly) too much with us.

I am very well; better than for years: that is for good. But then my wife is no great shakes; the place does not suit her—it is my private opinion that no place does—and she is now away down to New York for a change, which (as Lloyd is in Boston) leaves my mother and me and Valentine alone in our wind-beleaguered hilltop hatbox of a house. You should hear the cows butt against the walls in the early morning while they feed; you should also see our back log when the thermometer goes (as it does go) away—away below zero, till it can be seen no

more by the eye of man—not the thermometer, which is still perfectly visible, but the mercury, which curls up into the bulb like a hibernating bear; you should also see the lad who 'does chores' for us, with his red stockings and his thirteen-year-old face, and his highly manly tramp into the room; and his two alternative answers to all questions about the weather: either 'Cold,' or with a really lyrical movement of the voice, '*Lovely*—raining!'

Will you take this miserable scrap for what it is worth? Will you also understand that I am the man to blame, and my wife is really almost too much out of health to write, or at least doesn't write?—And believe me, with fond remembrances to Mrs. Boodle and your sisters, very sincerely yours,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## To Charles Baxter

The supposed Lord Warmingpan of the following was really Lord Pollington.

*Saranac Lake, 12th December '87*

Give us news of all your folk. A Merry Christmas from all of us.

MY DEAR CHARLES,—Will you please send £20 to —— —— for a Christmas from ——? Moreover, I cannot remember what I told you to send to ——; but as God has dealt so providentially with me this year, I now propose to make it £20.

I beg of you also to consider my strange position. I jined a club which it was said was to defend the Union; and I had a letter from the secretary, which

his name I believe was Lord Warmingpan (or words to that effect), to say I am elected, and had better pay up a certain sum of money, I forget what. Now I cannae verra weel draw a blank cheque and send to—

LORD WARMINGPAN (or words to that effect),
London, England.

And, man, if it was possible, I would be dooms glad to be out of this bit scrapie. Mebbe the club was ca'd 'The Union,' but I wouldnæ like to sweir; and mebbe it was nae, or mebbe only words to that effec' but I wouldnae care just exac'ly about sweirin'. Do ye no think Henley, or Pollick, or some o' they London fellies, micht mebbe perhaps find out for me? and just what the soom was? And that you would aiblins pay for me? For I thocht I was sae dam patriotic jinin', and it would be a kind o' a comedoun to be turned out again. Mebbe Lang would ken; or mebbe Rider Haggyard: they're kind o' Union folks. But it's my belief his name was Warmingpan whatever.—Yours,

THOMSON,
*alias* ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Could it be Warminster?

## To Miss Monroe

The play of *Deacon Brodie* was at this time being performed at Chicago, with Mr. E. J. Henley in the title-part.

*Saranac Lake, New York* [*December* 19, 1887]

DEAR MISS MONROE,—Many thanks for your letter and your good wishes. It was much my desire to

get to Chicago: had I done—or if I yet do—so, I shall hope to see the original of my photograph, which is one of my show possessions; but the fates are rather contrary. My wife is far from well; I myself dread, worse than almost any other imaginable peril, that miraculous and really insane invention the American Railroad Car. Heaven help the man—may I add the woman—that sets foot in one! Ah, if it were only an ocean to cross, it would be a matter of small thought to me—and great pleasure. But the railroad car—every man has his weak point; and I fear the railroad car as abjectly as I do an earwig, and, on the whole, on better grounds. You do not know how bitter it is to have to make such a confession; for you have not the pretension nor the weakness of a man. If I do get to Chicago, you will hear of me: so much can be said. And do you never come east?

I was pleased to recognise a word of my poor old *Deacon* in your letter. It would interest me very much to hear how it went and what you thought of piece and actors; and my collaborator, who knows and respects the photograph, would be pleased too.—Still in the hope of seeing you, I am, yours very truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## TO HENRY JAMES

[*Saranac Lake, Winter* 1887–88]

MY DEAR HENRY JAMES,—It may please you to know how our family has been employed. In the

silence of the snow the afternoon lamp has lighted an eager fireside group: my mother reading, Fanny, Lloyd, and I devoted listeners; and the work was really one of the best works I ever heard; and its author is to be praised and honoured; and what do you suppose is the name of it? and have you ever read it yourself? and (I am bound I will get to the bottom of the page before I blow the gaff, if I have to fight it out on this line all summer; for if you have not to turn a leaf, there can be no suspense, the conspectory eye being swift to pick out proper names; and without suspense, there can be little pleasure in this world, to my mind at least)—and, in short, the name of it is *Roderick Hudson*, if you please. My dear James, it is very spirited, and very sound, and very noble too. Hudson, Mrs. Hudson, Rowland, O, all first-rate: Rowland a very fine fellow; Hudson as good as he can stick (did you know Hudson? I suspect you did), Mrs. H. his real born mother, a thing rarely managed in fiction.

We are all keeping pretty fit and pretty hearty; but this letter is not from me to you, it is from a reader of *R.H.* to the author of the same, and it says nothing, and has nothing to say, but thank you.

We are going to re-read *Casamassima* as a proper pendant. Sir, I think these two are your best, and care not who knows it.

May I beg you, the next time *Roderick* is printed off, to go over the sheets of the last few chapters, and strike out 'immense' and 'tremendous'? You have simply dropped them there like your pocket-handkerchief; all you have to do is to pick them up

and pouch them, and your room—what do I say?—your cathedral!—will be swept and garnished.—I am, dear sir, your delighted reader,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

*P. S.*—Perhaps it is a pang of causeless honesty, perhaps I hope it will set a value on my praise of *Roderick*, perhaps it's a burst of the diabolic, but I must break out with the news that I can't bear the *Portrait of a Lady*. I read it all, and I wept too; but I can't stand your having written it; and I beg you will write no more of the like. *Infra*, sir; Below you; I can't help it—it may be your favourite work, but in my eyes it's BELOW YOU to write and me to read. I thought *Roderick* was going to be another such at the beginning: and I cannot describe my pleasure as I found it taking bones and blood, and looking out at me with a moved and human countenance, whose lineaments are written in my memory until my last of days.

R. L. S.

My wife begs your forgiveness; I believe for her silence.

## To SIDNEY COLVIN

*Saranac Lake* [*December* 1887]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—This goes to say that we are all fit, and the place is very bleak and wintry, and up to now has shown no such charms of climate as Davos, but is a place where men eat and where the cattarh, catarrh (cattarrh, or cattarrhh) appears to be unknown. I walk in my verandy in the snaw, sir,

looking down over one of those dabbled wintry landscapes that are (to be frank) so chilly to the human bosom, and up at a grey, English—nay, *mehercle*, Scottish—heaven; and I think it pretty bleak; and the wind swoops at me round the corner, like a lion, and fluffs the snow in my face; and I could aspire to be elsewhere; but yet I do not catch cold, and yet, when I come in, I eat. So that hitherto Saranac, if not deliriously delectable, has not been a failure; nay, from the mere point of view of the wicked body, it has proved a success. But I wish I could still get to the woods; alas, *nous n'irons plus au bois* is my poor song; the paths are buried, the dingles drifted full, a little walk is grown a long one; till spring comes, I fear the burthen will hold good.

I get along with my papers for Scribner not fast, nor so far specially well; only this last, the fourth one (which makes a third part of my whole task), I do believe is pulled off after a fashion. It is a mere sermon: 'Smith opens out';[1] but it is true, and I find it touching and beneficial, to me at least; and I think there is some fine writing in it, some very apt and pregnant phrases. *Pulvis et Umbra*, I call it; I might have called it a Darwinian Sermon, if I had wanted. Its sentiments, although parsonic, will not offend even you, I believe. The other three papers, I fear, bear many traces of effort, and the ungen-

[1] 'Smith opens out his cauld harangues
On practice and on morals.'

The Rev. George Smith of Galston, the minister thus referred to by Burns (in the *Holy Fair*), was a great-grandfather of Stevenson on the mother's side; and against Stevenson himself, in his didactic moods, the passage was often quoted by his friends when they wished to tease him.

uine inspiration of an income at so much per essay, and the honest desire of the incomer to give good measure for his money. Well, I did my damndest anyway.

We have been reading H. James's *Roderick Hudson*, which I eagerly press you to get at once: it is a book of a high order—the last volume in particular. I wish Meredith would read it. It took my breath away.

I am at the seventh book of the *Æneid*, and quite amazed at its merits (also very often floored by its difficulties). The Circe passage at the beginning, and the sublime business of Amata with the simile of the boy's top—O Lord, what a happy thought!—have specially delighted me.—I am, dear sir, your respected friend,

JOHN GREGG GILLSON, J.P., M.R.I.A., etc.

## TO SIDNEY COLVIN

The following narrates the beginning of the author's labours on *The Master of Ballantrae*. An unfinished paper written some years later in Samoa, and intended for Scribner's Magazine, tells how the story first took shape in his mind. See Edinburgh edition, *Miscellanies*, vol. iv. p. 297: reprinted in *Essays on the Art of Writing*.

[*Saranac Lake, December* 24, 1887]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—Thank you for your explanations. I have done no more Virgil since I finished the seventh book, for I have first been eaten up with Taine, and next have fallen head over heels into a new tale, *The Master of Ballantrae*. No thought have I now apart from it, and I have got along up to

page ninety-two of the draft with great interest. It is to me a most seizing tale; there are some fantastic elements; the most is a dead genuine human problem—human tragedy, I should say rather. It will be about as long, I imagine, as *Kidnapped.*

DRAMATIS PERSONAE:

(1) My old Lord Durrisdeer.
(2) The Master of Ballantrae, *and*
(3) Henry Durie, *his sons.*
(4) Clementina,[1] *engaged to the first, married to the second.*
(5) Ephraim Mackellar, *land steward at Durrisdeer and narrator of the most of the book.*
(6) Francis Burke, Chevalier de St. Louis, *one of Prince Charlie's Irishmen and narrator of the rest.*

Besides these, many instant figures, most of them dumb or nearly so: Jessie Brown the whore, Captain Crail, Captain MacCombie, our old friend Alan Breck, our old friend Riach (both only for an instant), Teach the pirate (vulgarly Blackbeard), John Paul and Macconochie, servants at Durrisdeer. The date is from 1745 to '65 (about). The scene, near Kirkcudbright, in the States, and for a little moment in the French East Indies. I have done most of the big work, the quarrel, duel between the brothers, and announcement of the death to Clementina and my Lord—Clementina, Henry, and Mackellar (nicknamed Squaretoes) are really very fine

[1] Afterwards changed to Alison.

fellows; the Master is all I know of the devil. I have known hints of him, in the world, but always cowards; he is as bold as a lion, but with the same deadly, causeless duplicity I have watched with so much surprise in my two cowards. 'Tis true, I saw a hint of the same nature in another man who was not a coward; but he had other things to attend to; the Master has nothing else but his devilry. Here come my visitors—and have now gone, or the first relay of them; and I hope no more may come. For mark you, sir, this is our 'day'—Saturday, as ever was; and here we sit, my mother and I, before a large wood fire and await the enemy with the most steadfast courage; and without snow and greyness: and the woman Fanny in New York for her health, which is far from good; and the lad Lloyd at the inn in the village because he has a cold; and the handmaid Valentine abroad in a sleigh upon her messages; and to-morrow Christmas and no mistake. Such is human life: *la carrière humaine.* I will enclose, if I remember, the required autograph.

I will do better, put it on the back of this page. Love to all, and mostly, my very dear Colvin, to yourself. For whatever I say or do, or don't say or do, you may be very sure I am—Yours always affectionately,

R. L. S.

## To Miss Adelaide Boodle

*Saranac Lake, Christmas* 1887

MY DEAR MISS BOODLE,—And a very good Christmas to you all; and better fortune; and if worse, the more courage to support it—which I think is the kinder wish in all human affairs. Somewhile—I fear a good while—after this, you should receive our Christmas gift; we have no tact and no taste, only a welcome and (often) tonic brutality; and I dare say the present, even after my friend Baxter has acted on and reviewed my hints, may prove a White Elephant. That is why I dread presents. And therefore pray understand if any element of that hamper prove unwelcome, *it is to be exchanged.* I will not sit down under the name of a giver of White Elephants. I never had any elephant but one, and his initials were R. L. S.; and he trod on my foot at a very early age. But this is a fable, and not in the least to the point: which is that if, for once in my life, I have wished to make things nicer for anybody but the Elephant (see fable), do not suffer me to have made them ineffably more embarrassing, and exchange—ruthlessly exchange!

For my part, I am the most cockered up of any mortal being; and one of the healthiest, or thereabout, at some modest distance from the bull's eye. I am condemned to write twelve articles in Scribner's Magazine for the love of gain; I think I had better send you them; what is far more to the purpose, I am on the jump with a new story which has bewitched

me—I doubt it may bewitch no one else. It is called *The Master of Ballantrae*—pronounce Bālläntray. If it is not good, well, mine will be the fault; for I believe it is a good tale.

The greetings of the season to you, and your mother, and your sisters. My wife heartily joins.—And I am, yours very sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

*P.S.*—You will think me an illiterate dog: I am, for the first time, reading Robertson's sermons. I do not know how to express how much I think of them. If by any chance you should be as illiterate as I, and not know them, it is worth while curing the defect.

R. L. S.

## TO CHARLES BAXTER

The following letter invites Mr. Baxter to allow himself (under an *alias*) and his office in Edinburgh to figure in a preface to the new story. Such a preface was drafted accordingly, but on second thoughts suppressed; to be, on renewed consideration, reinstated in the final editions.

*Saranac Lake, January* '88

DEAR CHARLES,—You are the flower of Doers. . . . Will my doer collaborate thus much in my new novel? In the year 1794 or 5, Mr. Ephraim Mackellar, A.M., late steward on the Durrisdeer estates, completed a set of memoranda (as long as a novel) with regard to the death of the (then) late Lord Durrisdeer, and as to that of his attainted elder brother, called by the family courtesy title the Master of Ballantrae. These he placed in the hand of John Macbrair, W.S., the family agent, on the understanding they were to be

sealed until 1862, when a century would have elapsed since the affair in the wilderness (my lord's death). You succeeded Mr. Macbrair's firm; the Durrisdeers are extinct; and last year, in an old green box, you found these papers with Macbrair's indorsation. It is that indorsation of which I want a copy; you may remember, when you gave me the papers, I neglected to take that, and I am sure you are a man too careful of antiquities to have let it fall aside. I shall have a little introduction descriptive of my visit to Edinburgh, arrival there, denner with yoursel', and first reading of the papers in your smoking-room: all of which, of course, you well remember.—Ever yours affectionately.

R. L. S.

Your name is my friend Mr. Johnstone Thomson, W.S.!!!

## To E. L. Burlingame

*Saranac Lake, Winter* 1887–88

DEAR MR. BURLINGAME,—I am keeping the sermon to see if I can't add another. Meanwhile, I will send you very soon a different paper which may take its place. Possibly some of these days soon I may get together a talk on things current, which should go in (if possible) earlier than either. I am now less nervous about these papers; I believe I can do the trick without great strain, though the terror that breathed on my back in the beginning is not yet forgotten.

The *Master of Ballantrae* I have had to leave aside, as I was quite worked out. But in about a week I

hope to try back and send you the first four numbers: these are all drafted, it is only the revision that has broken me down, as it is often the hardest work. These four I propose you should set up for me at once, and we'll copyright 'em in a pamphlet. I will tell you the names of the *bona fide* purchasers in England.

The numbers will run from twenty to thirty pages of my manuscript. You can give me that much, can you not? It is a howling good tale—at least these first four numbers are; the end is a trifle more fantastic, but 'tis all picturesque.

Don't trouble about any more French books; I am on another scent, you see, just now. Only the *French in Hindustan* I await with impatience, as that is for *Ballantrae.* The scene of that romance is Scotland—the States—Scotland—India—Scotland —and the States again; so it jumps like a flea. I have enough about the States now, and very much obliged I am; yet if Drake's *Tragedies of the Wilderness* is (as I gather) a collection of originals, I should like to purchase it. If it is a picturesque vulgarisation, I do not wish to look it in the face. Purchase, I say; for I think it would be well to have some such collection by me with a view to fresh works.—Yours very sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

*P.S.*—If you think of having the *Master* illustrated, I suggest that Hole would be very well up to the Scottish, which is the larger, part. If you have it done here, tell your artist to look at the hall of

Craigievar in Billing's *Baronial and Ecclesiastical Antiquities*, and he will get a broad hint for the hall at Durrisdeer; it is, I think, the chimney of Craigievar and the roof of Pinkie, and perhaps a little more of Pinkie altogether; but I should have to see the book myself to be sure. Hole would be invaluable for this. I dare say if you had it illustrated, you could let me have one or two for the English edition.

R. L. S.

## To William Archer

The following refers to Mr. Bernard Shaw's novel, *Cashel Byron's Profession*, which had been sent Stevenson to read by their common friend Mr. Archer.

[*Saranac Lake, Winter* 1887–88

MY DEAR ARCHER,—What am I to say? I have read your friend's book with singular relish. If he has written any other, I beg you will let me see it; and if he has not, I beg him to lose no time in supplying the deficiency. It is full of promise; but I should like to know his age. There are things in it that are very clever, to which I attach small importance; it is the shape of the age. And there are passages, particularly the rally in presence of the Zulu king, that show genuine and remarkable narrative talent—a talent that few will have the wit to understand, a talent of strength, spirit, capacity, sufficient vision, and sufficient self-sacrifice, which last is the chief point in a narrator.

As a whole, it is (of course) a fever dream of the most feverish. Over Bashville the footman I howled with derision and delight; I dote on Bashville—I

could read of him for ever; *de Bashville je suis le fervent*—there is only one Bashville, and I am his devoted slave; *Bashville est magnifique, mais il n'est guère possible.* He is the note of the book. It is all mad, mad and deliriously delightful; the author has a taste in chivalry like Walter Scott's or Dumas', and then he daubs in little bits of socialism; he soars away on the wings of the romantic griffon—even the griffon, as he cleaves air, shouting with laughter at the nature of the quest—and I believe in his heart he thinks he is labouring in a quarry of solid granite realism.

It is this that makes me—the most hardened adviser now extant—stand back and hold my peace. If Mr. Shaw is below five-and-twenty, let him go his path; if he is thirty, he had best be told that he is a romantic, and pursue romance with his eyes open; —or perhaps, he knows it;—God knows!—my brain is softened.

It is HORRID FUN. All I ask is more of it. Thank you for the pleasure you gave us, and tell me more of the inimitable author.

(I say, Archer, my God, what women!)—Yours very truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

1 part Charles Reade; 1 part Henry James or some kindred author badly assimilated; ½ part Disraeli (perhaps unconscious); 1½ parts struggling, over-laid original talent; 1 part blooming, gaseous folly. That is the equation as it stands. What it may be, I don't know, nor any other man. *Vixere fortes*—O, let him remember that—let him beware

of his damned century; his gifts of insane chivalry and animated narration are just those that might be slain and thrown out like an untimely birth by the Daemon of the epoch. And if he only knew how I have adored the chivalry! Bashville!—*O Bashville! j'en chortle* (which is fairly polyglot).

R. L. S.

## To William Archer

[*Saranac Lake*], *February* 1888

MY DEAR ARCHER,—Pretty sick in bed; but necessary to protest and continue your education.

Why was Jenkin an amateur in my eyes? You think because not amusing (I think he often was amusing). The reason is this: I never, or almost never, saw two pages of his work that I could not have put in one without the smallest loss of material. That is the only test I know of writing. If there is anywhere a thing said in two sentences that could have been as clearly and as engagingly and as forcibly said in one, then it's amateur work. Then you will bring me up with old Dumas. Nay, the object of a story is to be long, to fill up hours; the story-teller's art of writing is to water out by continual invention, historical and technical, and yet not seem to water; seem on the other hand to practise that same wit of conspicuous and declaratory condensation which is the proper art of writing. That is one thing in which my stories fail: I am always cutting the flesh off the bones.

I would rise from the dead to preach!

Hope all well. I think my wife better, but she's

not allowed to write; and this (only wrung from me by desire to Boss and Parsonise and Dominate, strong in sickness) is my first letter for days, and will likely be my last for many more. Not blame my wife for her silence: doctor's orders. All much interested by your last, and fragment from brother, and anecdotes of Tomarcher.—The sick but still Moral

R. L. S.

Tell Shaw to hurry up: I want another.

### To William Archer

In early days in Paris, Stevenson's chivalrous feelings had once been shocked by the scene in the *Demi-Monde* of Dumas fils, where Suzanne d'Ange is trapped by Olivier de Jalin. His correspondent had asked what exactly took place.

[*Saranac Lake, February* 1888?]

MY DEAR ARCHER,—It happened thus. I came forth from that performance in a breathing heat of indignation. (Mind, at this distance of time and with my increased knowledge, I admit there is a problem in the piece; but I saw none then, except a problem in brutality; and I still consider the problem in that case not established.) On my way down the *Français* stairs, I trod on an old gentleman's toes, whereupon with that suavity that so well becomes me, I turned about to apologise, and on the instant, repenting me of that intention, stopped the apology midway, and added something in French to this effect: No, you are one of the *lâches* who have been applauding that piece. I retract my apology. Said the old Frenchman, laying his hand on my arm, and with a smile that was truly heavenly in tem-

perance, irony, good-nature, and knowledge of the world, 'Ah, monsieur, vous êtes bien jeune!'—Yours very truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## To E. L. BURLINGAME

[*Saranac Lake, February* 1888]

DEAR MR. BURLINGAME,—Will you send me (from the library) some of the works of my dear old G. P. R. James? With the following especially I desire to make or to renew acquaintance: *The Songster, The Gipsy, The Convict, The Stepmother, The Gentleman of the Old School, The Robber.*

*Excusez du peu.*

This sudden return to an ancient favourite hangs upon an accident. The 'Franklin County Library' contains two works of his, *The Cavalier* and *Morley Ernstein.* I read the first with indescribable amusement—it was worse than I had feared, and yet somehow engaging; the second (to my surprise) was better than I had dared to hope: a good, honest, dull, interesting tale, with a genuine old-fashioned talent in the invention when not strained; and a genuine old-fashioned feeling for the English language. This experience awoke appetite, and you see I have taken steps to stay it.

R. L. S.

## To E. L. BURLINGAME

[*Saranac Lake, February* 1888]

DEAR MR. BURLINGAME,—1. Of course then don't use it. Dear Man, I write these to please you, not

myself, and you know a main sight better than I do what is good. In that case, however, I enclose another paper, and return the corrected proof of *Pulvis et Umbra*, so that we may be afloat.

2. I want to say a word as to the *Master*. (The *Master of Ballantrae* shall be the name by all means.) If you like and want it, I leave it to you to make an offer. You may remember I thought the offer you made when I was still in England too small; by which I did not at all mean, I thought it less than it was worth, but too little to tempt me to undergo the disagreeables of serial publication. This tale (if you want it) you are to have; for it is the least I can do for you; and you are to observe that the sum you pay me for my articles going far to meet my wants, I am quite open to be satisfied with less than formerly. I tell you I do dislike this battle of the dollars. I feel sure you all pay too much here in America; and I beg you not to spoil me any more. For I am getting spoiled: I do not want wealth, and I feel these big sums demoralise me.

My wife came here pretty ill; she had a dreadful bad night; to-day she is better. But now Valentine is ill; and Lloyd and I have got breakfast, and my hand somewhat shakes after washing dishes.—Yours very sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

*P.S.*—Please order me the Evening Post for two months. My subscription is run out. The *Mutiny* and *Edwardes* to hand.

## To Sidney Colvin

[*Saranac Lake, March* 1888]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—Fanny has been very unwell. She is not long home, has been ill again since her return, but is now better again to a degree. You must not blame her for not writing, as she is not allowed to write at all, not even a letter. To add to our misfortunes, Valentine is quite ill and in bed. Lloyd and I get breakfast; I have now, 10.15, just got the dishes washed and the kitchen all clear, and sit down to give you as much news as I have spirit for, after such an engagement. Glass is a thing that really breaks my spirit: I do not like to fail, and with glass I cannot reach the work of my high calling—the artist's.

I am, as you may gather from this, wonderfully better: this harsh, grey, glum, doleful climate has done me good. You cannot fancy how sad a climate it is. When the thermometer stays all day below 10°, it is really cold; and when the wind blows, O commend me to the result. Pleasure in life is all delete; there is no red spot left, fires do not radiate, you burn your hands all the time on what seem to be cold stones. It is odd, zero is like summer heat to us now; and we like, when the thermometer outside is really low, a room at about 48°: 60° we find oppressive. Yet the natives keep their holes at 90° or even 100°.

This was interrupted days ago by household labours. Since then I have had and (I tremble to write it, but it does seem as if I had) beaten off an

influenza. The cold is exquisite. Valentine still in bed. The proofs of the first part of *The Master of Ballantrae* begin to come in; soon you shall have it in the pamphlet form; and I hope you will like it. The second part will not be near so good; but there —we can but do as it'll do with us. I have every reason to believe this winter has done me real good, so far as it has gone; and if I carry out my scheme for next winter, and succeeding years, I should end by being a tower of strength. I want you to save a good holiday for next winter; I hope we shall be able to help you to some larks. Is there any Greek Isle you would like to explore? or any creek in Asia Minor?—Yours ever affectionately,

R. L. S.

## To the Rev Dr. Charteris

The Rev. Dr. Charteris, of Edinburgh, had been one of the most intimate and trusted friends of Stevenson's father, and R. L. S. turns to him accordingly for memories and impressions.

[*Saranac Lake, Winter* 1887–88]

MY DEAR DR. CHARTERIS,—I have asked Douglas and Foulis to send you my last volume, so that you may possess my little paper on my father in a permanent shape; not for what that is worth, but as a tribute of respect to one whom my father regarded with such love, esteem, and affection. Besides, as you will see, I have brought you under contribution, and I have still to thank you for your letter to my mother; so more than kind; in much, so just. It is my hope, when time and health permit, to do something more definite for my father's memory.

You are one of the very few who can (if you will) help me. Pray believe that I lay on you no obligation; I know too well, you may believe me, how difficult it is to put even two sincere lines upon paper, where all, too, is to order. But if the spirit should ever move you, and you should recall something memorable of your friend, his son will heartily thank you for a note of it.—With much respect, believe me, yours sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## To EDMUND GOSSE

[*Saranac Lake, March* 31, 1888]

MY DEAR GOSSE,—Why so plaintive? Either the post-office has played us false, or you were in my debt. In case it should be my letter that has failed to come to post, I must tell again the fate of Mrs. Gosse's thermometer. It hangs in our sitting-room, where it has often marked freezing point and below; 'See what Gosse says,' is a common word of command. But the point is this: in the verandah hangs another thermometer, condemned to register minus 40° and the class of temperatures; and to him, we have given the name of the Quarterly Reviewer. I hope the jape likes you.

Please tell the Fortnightly man that I am sorry but I can do nothing of that sort this year, as I am under a pledge to Scribner's; and indeed my monthly articles take the best of my time. It was a project I went into with horrid diffidence; and lucre was my only motive. I get on better than I expected, but it

is difficult to find an article of the sort required for each date, and to vary the matter and keep up (if possible) the merit. I do not know if you think I have at all succeeded; it seemed to me this really worked paper was more money's worth (as well as probably better within my means) than the Lang business at the Sign of the Ship. Indeed I feel convinced I could never have managed that; it takes a gift to do it. Here is lunch.—Yours afftly.,

R. L. S.

## To Henry James

[*Saranac Lake, March* 1888]

MY DEAR DELIGHTFUL JAMES.—To quote your heading to my wife, I think no man writes so elegant a letter, I am sure none so kind, unless it be Colvin, and there is more of the stern parent about him. I was vexed at your account of my admired Meredith: I wish I could go and see him; as it is I will try to write; and yet (do you understand me?) there is something in that potent, *genialisch* affection that puts one on the strain even to address him in a letter. He is not an easy man to be yourself with; there is so much of him, and the veracity and the high athletic intellectual humbug are so intermixed.[1] I read with indescribable admiration your *Emerson.* I begin to long for the day when these portraits of yours shall be collected: do put me in. But Emerson is a higher flight. Have you a *Tourgueneff?* You

[1] Alluding to a kind of lofty posturing way of G. M's. in mind and speech, quite different from any real insincerity.

have told me many interesting things of him, and I seem to see them written, and forming a graceful and *bildend* sketch. (I wonder whence comes this flood of German—I haven't opened a German book since I teethed.) My novel is a tragedy; four parts out of six or seven are written, and gone to Burlingame. Five parts of it are bound, human tragedy; the last one or two, I regret to say, not so soundly designed; I almost hesitate to write them; they are very picturesque, but they are fantastic; they shame, perhaps, degrade, the beginning. I wish I knew; that was how the tale came to me however. I got the situation; it was an old taste of mine: The older brother goes out in the '45, the younger stays; the younger, of course, gets title and estate and marries the bride designate of the elder—a family match, but he (the younger) had always loved her, and she had really loved the elder. Do you see the situation? Then the devil and Saranac suggested this *dénouement*, and I joined the two ends in a day or two of constant feverish thought, and began to write. And now—I wonder if I have not gone too far with the fantastic? The elder brother is an INCUBUS: supposed to be killed at Culloden, he turns up again and bleeds the family of money; on that stopping he comes and lives with them, whence flows the real tragedy, the nocturnal duel of the brothers (very naturally, and indeed, I think, inevitably arising), and second supposed death of the elder. Husband and wife now really make up, and then the cloven hoof appears. For the third supposed death and the manner of the third reappearance is steep; steep,

sir. It is even very steep, and I fear it shames the honest stuff so far; but then it is highly pictorial, and it leads up to the death of the elder brother at the hands of the younger in a perfectly cold-blooded murder, of which I wish (and mean) the reader to approve. You see how daring is the design. There are really but six characters, and one of these episodic, and yet it covers eighteen years, and will be, I imagine, the longest of my works.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

*Read Gosse's Raleigh.* First-rate.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

## To the Rev. Dr. Charteris

*Saranac Lake, Adirondacks,*
*New York, U.S.A.* [*Spring* 1888]

MY DEAR DR. CHARTERIS,—The funeral letter, your notes, and many other things, are reserved for a book, *Memorials of a Scottish Family*, if ever I can find time and opportunity. I wish I could throw off all else and sit down to it to-day. Yes, my father was a 'distinctly religious man,' but not a pious. The distinction painfully and pleasurably recalls old conflicts; it used to be my great gun—and you, who suffered for the whole Church, know how needful it was to have some reserve artillery! His sentiments were tragic; he was a tragic thinker. Now, granted that life is tragic to the marrow, it seems the proper function of religion to make us accept and serve in that tragedy, as officers in that other and comparable one of war. Service is the word, active

service, in the military sense; and the religious man —I beg pardon, the pious man—is he who has a military joy in duty—not he who weeps over the wounded. We can do no more than try to do our best. Really, I am the grandson of the manse—I preach you a kind of sermon. Box the brat's ears!

My mother—to pass to matters more within my competence—finely enjoys herself. The new country, some new friends we have made, the interesting experiment of the climate—which (at least) is tragic —all have done her good. I have myself passed a better winter than for years, and now that it is nearly over have some diffident hopes of doing well in the summer and 'eating a little more air' than usual.

I thank you for the trouble you are taking, and my mother joins with me in kindest regards to yourself and Mrs. Charteris.—Yours very truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## To S. R. CROCKETT

[*Saranac Lake, Spring* 1888]

DEAR MINISTER OF THE FREE KIRK AT PENICUIK,

—For O, man, I cannae read your name!—That I have been so long in answering your delightful letter sits on my conscience badly. The fact is I let my correspondence accumulate until I am going to leave a place; and then I pitch in, overhaul the pile, and my cries of penitence might be heard a mile about. Yesterday I despatched thirty-five belated letters: conceive the state of my conscience, above all as the Sins of Omission (see boyhood's guide,

the Shorter Catechism) are in my view the only serious ones; I call it my view, but it cannot have escaped you that it was also Christ's. However, all that is not to the purpose, which is to thank you for the sincere pleasure afforded by your charming letter. I get a good few such; how few that please me at all, you would be surprised to learn—or have a singularly just idea of the dulness of our race; how few that please me as yours did, I can tell you in one word—*None.* I am no great kirkgoer, for many reasons—and the sermon's one of them, and the first prayer another, but the chief and effectual reason is the stuffiness. I am no great kirkgoer, says I, but when I read yon letter of yours, I thought I would like to sit under ye. And then I saw ye were to send me a bit buik, and says I, I'll wait for the bit buik, and then I'll mebbe can read the man's name, and anyway I'll can kill twa birds wi' ae stane. And, man, the buik was ne'er heard tell o'!

That fact is an adminicle of excuse for my delay.

And now, dear minister of the illegible name, thanks to you, and greeting to your wife, and may you have good guidance in your difficult labours, and a blessing on your life.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

(No just sae young's he was, though—
I'm awfae near forty, man.)

Address c/o Charles Scribner's Sons,
743 Broadway, New York.

Don't put 'N. B.' in your paper: put *Scotland*, and be done with it. Alas, that I should be thus

stabbed in the home of my friends! The name of my native land is not *North Britain*, whatever may be the name of yours.

R. L. S.

## To Miss Ferrier

[*Saranac Lake, April* 1888]

MY DEAREST COGGIE,—I wish I could find the letter I began to you some time ago when I was ill; but I can't and I don't believe there was much in it anyway. We have all behaved like pigs and beasts and barn-door poultry to you; but I have been sunk in work, and the lad is lazy and blind and has been working too; and as for Fanny, she has been (and still is) really unwell. I had a mean hope you might perhaps write again before I got up steam: I could not have been more ashamed of myself than I am, and I should have had another laugh.

They always say I cannot give news in my letters: I shall shake off that reproach. On Monday, if she is well enough, Fanny leaves for California to see her friends; it is rather an anxiety to let her go alone; but the doctor simply forbids it in my case, and she is better anywhere than here—a bleak, blackguard, beggarly climate, of which I can say no good except that it suits me and some others of the same or similar persuasions whom (by all rights) it ought to kill. It is a form of Arctic St. Andrews, I should imagine; and the miseries of forty degrees below zero, with a high wind, have to be felt to be appreciated. The greyness of the heavens here is a circumstance emi-

nently revolting to the soul; I have near forgot the aspect of the sun—I doubt if this be news; it is certainly no news to us. My mother suffers a little from the inclemency of the place, but less on the whole than would be imagined. Among other wild schemes, we have been projecting yacht voyages; and I beg to inform you that Cogia Hassan was cast for the part of passenger. They may come off!—Again this is not news. The lad? Well, the lad wrote a tale this winter, which appeared to me so funny that I have taken it in hand, and some of these days you will receive a copy of a work entitled '*A Game of Bluff*, by Lloyd Osbourne and Robert Louis Stevenson.'

Otherwise he (the lad) is much as usual. There remains, I believe, to be considered only R. L. S., the house-bond, prop, pillar, bread-winner, and bully of the establishment. Well, I do think him much better; he is making piles of money; the hope of being able to hire a yacht ere long dances before his eyes; otherwise he is not in very high spirits at this particular moment, though compared with last year at Bournemouth an angel of joy.

And now is this news, Cogia, or is it not? It all depends upon the point of view, and I call it news. The devil of it is that I can think of nothing else, except to send you all our loves, and to wish exceedingly you were here to cheer us all up. But we'll see about that on board the yacht.—Your affectionate friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## To Sidney Colvin

The Mutiny novel here foreshadowed never got written.

[*Saranac Lake*] *April 9th!!* 1888

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I have been long without writing to you, but am not to blame. I had some little annoyances quite for a private eye, but they ran me so hard that I could not write without lugging them in, which (for several reasons) I did not choose to do. Fanny is off to San Francisco, and next week I myself flit to New York; address Scribner's. Where we shall go I know not, nor (I was going to say) care; so bald and bad is my frame of mind. Do you know our—ahem!—fellow clubman, Colonel Majendie? I had such an interesting letter from him. Did you see my sermon? It has evoked the worst feeling: I fear people don't care for the truth, or else I don't tell it. Suffer me to wander without purpose. I have sent off twenty letters to-day, and begun and stuck at a twenty-first, and taken a copy of one which was on business, and corrected several galleys of proof, and sorted about a bushel of old letters; so if any one has a right to be romantically stupid it is I—and I am. Really deeply stupid, and at that stage when in old days I used to pour out words without any meaning whatever and with my mind taking no part in the performance. I suspect that is now the case. I am reading with extraordinary pleasure the life of Lord Lawrence: Lloyd and I have a mutiny novel—

(*Next morning, after twelve other letters*)—mutiny

novel on hand—a tremendous work—so we are all at Indian books. The idea of the novel is Lloyd's: I call it a novel. 'Tis a tragic romance, of the most tragic sort: I believe the end will be almost too much for human endurance—when the hero is thrown to the ground with one of his own (Sepoy) soldier's knees upon his chest, and the cries begin in the Beebeeghar. O truly, you know it is a howler! The whole last part is—well the difficulty is that, short of resuscitating Shakespeare, I don't know who is to write it.

I still keep wonderful. I am a great performer before the Lord on the penny whistle.—Dear sir, sincerely yours,

ANDREW JACKSON

## To Miss Adelaide Boodle

[*Saranac Lake, April* 1888]
*Address, c/o Messrs. Scribner's Sons,*
*743 Broadway, N. Y.*

MY DEAR GAMEKEEPER,—Your p.c. (proving you a good student of Micawber) has just arrived, and it paves the way to something I am anxious to say. I wrote a paper the other day—*Pulvis et Umbra*;—I wrote it with great feeling and conviction: to me it seemed bracing and healthful, it is in such a world (so seen by me), that I am very glad to fight out my battle, and see some fine sunsets, and hear some excellent jests between whiles round the camp fire. But I find that to some people this vision of mine is a nightmare, and extinguishes all ground of faith in

God or pleasure in man. Truth I think not so much of; for I do not know it. And I could wish in my heart that I had not published this paper, if it troubles folk too much: all have not the same digestion, nor the same sight of things. And it came over me with special pain that perhaps this article (which I was at the pains to send to her) might give dismalness to my *Gamekeeper at Home*. Well, I cannot take back what I have said; but yet I may add this. If my view be everything but the nonsense that it may be—to me it seems self-evident and blinding truth—surely of all things it makes this world holier. There is nothing in it but the moral side—but the great battle and the breathing times with their refreshments. I see no more and no less. And if you look again, it is not ugly, and it is filled with promise.

Pray excuse a desponding author for this apology. My wife is away off to the uttermost parts of the States, all by herself. I shall be off, I hope, in a week; but where? Ah! that I know not. I keep wonderful, and my wife a little better, and the lad flourishing. We now perform duets on two D tin whistles; it is no joke to make the bass; I think I must really send you one, which I wish you would correct. . . . I may be said to live for these instrumental labours now, but I have always some childishness on hand.—I am, dear Gamekeeper, your indulgent but intemperate Squire,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## To Sidney Colvin

Having spent the last fortnight of April at New York, Stevenson and his stepson, moved at the beginning of May to the small New Jersey watering-place from whence the following few letters are dated: his wife having meanwhile gone to San Francisco, where she presently made arrangements for the Pacific yachting trip.

*Union House, Manasquan, New Jersey* [*May* 1888]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—We are here at a delightful country inn, like a country French place, the only people in the house, a cat-boat at our disposal, the sea always audible on the outer beach, the lagoon as smooth as glass, all the little, queer, many coloured villas standing shuttered and empty; in front of ours, across the lagoon, two long wooden bridges; one for the rail, one for the road, sounding with intermittent traffic. It is highly pleasant, and a delightful change from Saranac. My health is much better for the change; I am sure I walked about four miles yesterday, one time with another—well, say three and a half; and the day before, I was out for four hours in the cat-boat, and was as stiff as a board in consequence. More letters call.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

## To Charles Baxter

*Union House, Manasquan, N. J., but address to Scribner's, 11th May* 1888

MY DEAR CHARLES,—I have found a yacht, and we are going the full pitch for seven months. If I cannot get my health back (more or less), 'tis madness; but, of course, there is the hope, and I will play big.

. . . If this business fails to set me up, well, £2000 is gone, and I know I can't get better. We sail from San Francisco, June 15th, for the South Seas in the yacht *Casco*.—With a million thanks for all your dear friendliness, ever yours affectionately,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## To Lady Taylor

[*Manasquan, May* 1888]

MY DEAR LADY TAYLOR,—I have to announce our great news. On June 15th we sail from San Francisco in the schooner yacht *Casco*, for a seven months' cruise in the South Seas. You can conceive what a state of excitement we are in; Lloyd perhaps first; but this is an old dream of mine which actually seems to be coming true, and I am sun-struck. It seems indeed too good to be true; and that we have not deserved so much good fortune. From Skerryvore to the Galapagos is a far cry! And from poking in a sick-room all winter to the deck of one's own ship, is indeed a heavenly change.

All these seven months I doubt if we can expect more than three mails at the best of it: and I do hope we may hear something of your news by each. I have no very clear views as to where the three addresses ought to be, but if you hear no later news, Charles Scribner's Sons will always have the run of our intended movements. And an early letter there would probably catch us at the Sandwich Islands. Tahiti will probably be the second point: and (as I

roughly guess) Quito the third. But the whole future is invested with heavenly clouds.

I trust you are all well and content, and have good news of the Shelleys, to whom I wish you would pass on ours. They should be able to sympathise with our delight.

Now I have all my miserable Scribner articles to rake together in the inside of a fortnight: so you must not expect me to be more copious. I have you all in the kindest memory, and am, your affectionate friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Remember me to Aubrey de Vere.

## To Homer St. Gaudens

The following is addressed from Manasquan to a boy, the son of the writer's friend, the sculptor St. Gaudens; for the rest, it explains itself.

*Manasquan, New Jersey, 27th May* 1888

DEAR HOMER ST. GAUDENS,—Your father has brought you this day to see me, and he tells me it is his hope you may remember the occasion. I am going to do what I can to carry out his wish; and it may amuse you, years after, to see this little scrap of paper and to read what I write. I must begin by testifying that you yourself took no interest whatever in the introduction, and in the most proper spirit displayed a single-minded ambition to get back to play, and this I thought an excellent and admirable point in your character. You were also (I use the past tense, with a view to the time when you shall

read, rather than to that when I am writing) a very pretty boy, and (to my European views) startlingly self-possessed. My time of observation was so limited that you must pardon me if I can say no more: what else I marked, what restlessness of foot and hand, what graceful clumsiness, what experimental designs upon the furniture, was but the common inheritance of human youth. But you may perhaps like to know that the lean flushed man in bed, who interested you so little, was in a state of mind extremely mingled and unpleasant: harassed with work which he thought he was not doing well, troubled with difficulties to which you will in time succeed, and yet looking forward to no less matter than a voyage to the South Seas and the visitation of savage and desert islands.—Your father's friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## To Henry James

*Manasquan (ahem!), New Jersey, May 28th,* 1888

MY DEAR JAMES,—With what a torrent it has come at last! Up to now, what I like best is the first number of a *London Life*. You have never done anything better, and I don't know if perhaps you have ever done anything so good as the girl's outburst: tip-top. I have been preaching your later works in your native land. I had to present the Beltraffio volume to Low, and it has brought him to his knees; he was *amazed* at the first part of Georgina's Rea-

sons, although (like me) not so well satisfied with Part II. It is annoying to find the American public as stupid as the English, but they will waken up in time: I wonder what they will think of *Two Nations?* . . .

This, dear James, is a valedictory. On June 15th the schooner yacht *Casco* will (weather and a jealous providence permitting) steam through the Golden Gates for Honolulu, Tahiti, the Galapagos, Guayaquil, and—I hope *not* the bottom of the Pacific. It will contain your obedient 'umble servant and party. It seems too good to be true, and is a very good way of getting through the green-sickness of maturity which, with all its accompanying ills, is now declaring itself in my mind and life. They tell me it is not so severe as that of youth: if I (and the *Casco*) are spared, I shall tell you more exactly, as I am one of the few people in the world who do not forget their own lives.

Good-bye, then, my dear fellow, and please write us a word; we expect to have three mails in the next two months: Honolulu, Tahiti, and Guayaquil. But letters will be forwarded from Scribner's, if you hear nothing more definite directly. In 3 (three) days I leave for San Francisco.—Ever yours most cordially,

R. L. S.

X

# PACIFIC VOYAGES

## YACHT *CASCO*—SCHOONER *EQUATOR*—S.S. *JANET NICOLL*

JUNE 1888–OCTOBER 1890

IN the following section are printed nearly all the letters which reached Stevenson's correspondents in England and the United States, at intervals necessarily somewhat rare, during the eighteen months of his Pacific voyages. It was on the 28th of June 1888 that he started from the harbour of San Francisco on what was only intended to be a health and pleasure excursion of a few months' duration, but turned into a voluntary exile prolonged until the hour of his death. His company consisted, besides himself, of his wife, his mother, his stepson Mr. Lloyd Osbourne, and the servant Valentine Roch. They sailed on board the schooner yacht *Casco*, Captain Otis, and made straight for the Marquesas, dropping anchor on the 28th of July in Anaho Bay, the harbour of the island of Nukahiva. The magic effect of this first island landfall on his mind he has described in the opening chapter of his book *The South Seas*. After spending six weeks in this group they sailed south-eastwards, visiting (a

sufficiently perilous piece of navigation) several of the coral atolls of the Paumotus or Low Archipelago. Thence they arrived in the first week of October at the Tahitian group or 'Society' islands. In these their longest stay was not at the chief town, Papeete, where Stevenson fell sharply ill, but in a more secluded and very beautiful station, Tautira, whither he went to recruit, and where they were detained by the necessity of remasting the schooner. Here Stevenson and one of the local chiefs, Ori a Ori, made special friends and parted with heartfelt mutual regret. Mrs. Stevenson is good enough to allow me to supplement the somewhat fragmentary account of these adventures given in his letters with one or two of her own, in which they are told with full vividness and detail.

Sailing from Tahiti due northwards through forty degrees of latitude, the party arrived about Christmas at Honolulu, the more than semi-civilised capital of the Hawaiian group (Sandwich Islands), where they paid off the yacht *Casco* and made a stay of nearly six months. Here Stevenson finished the *Master of Ballantrae* and *The Wrong Box*; and hence his mother returned for a while to Scotland, to join her son's household when it was fairly installed two years later at Vailima. From Honolulu Stevenson made several excursions, including one, which profoundly impressed him, to the leper settlement at Molokai, the scene of Father Damien's ministrations and death.

This first year of cruising and residence among the Pacific Islands had resulted in so encouraging a renewal of health, with so keen a zest added to life by the restored capacity for outdoor activity and adventure, that Stevenson determined to prolong his experiences in yet more remote archipelagoes of the same ocean. He started accordingly from Honolulu in June 1889 on a trading schooner, the *Equator*, bound to the Gilberts, one of the least visited and most primitively mannered of all the island groups of the Western Pacific; emerged towards Christmas of the same year into semi-civilisation again at Apia, on the island of Upolu in Samoa, where he wrote his first Polynesian story, the *Bottle Imp*. Enchanted with the scenery and the people, he stayed for six weeks, first in the house of Mr. H. J. Moors, a leading American trader, then with his family in a separate cottage not far off; bought an estate on the densely wooded mountain side above Apia, with the notion of making there, if not a home, at least a place of rest and call on later projected excursions among the islands; and began to make collections for his studies in recent Samoan history. In February he went on to Sydney to find his correspondence and consider future plans. It was during this stay at Sydney that he was moved to give expression to his righteous indignation at the terms of a letter concerning Father Damien by the Rev. Dr. Hyde of Honolulu. Here also he fell once more seriously ill, with a renewal of all his old symptoms; and the

conclusion was forced upon him that he must take up his residence for the rest of his life in the tropics —though with occasional excursions, as he then hoped, at least half-way homeward to places where it might be possible for friends from England to meet him. In order to shake off the effects of this attack, he started with his party on a fresh sea voyage from Sydney, this time on a trading steamer, the *Janet Nicoll*, which took him by a very devious course to the Gilberts again, the Marshalls, and among many other remote islands during the months of April–August 1890. During the voyage he began to put into shape the notes for a volume on the South Seas which he had been compiling ever since he left San Francisco. Unfortunately, he persisted in the endeavour to make his work impersonal and full of information, or what he called 'serious interest,' exactly in the manner which his wife had foreseen before they left Honolulu, and from which she had wisely tried to dissuade him (see her letter printed on p. 143 foll.). On the return voyage Stevenson left the *Janet Nicoll* to land in New Caledonia, staying for some days at Noumea before he went on to Sydney, where he spent four or five weeks of later August and September. Thence he returned in October to take up his abode for good on his Samoan property, where the work of clearing, planting, and building a habitable cottage had been going on busily during his absence.

## To Sidney Colvin

It should be remembered that the Marquesas, the Paumotus, and the Tahitian group are all dependencies of France.

*Yacht* Casco, *Anaho Bay, Nukahiva, Marquesas Islands* [*July* 1888]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—From this somewhat (ahem) out of the way place, I write to say how d'ye do. It is all a swindle: I chose these isles as having the most beastly population, and they are far better, and far more civilised than we. I know one old chief Ko-o-amua, a great cannibal in his day, who ate his enemies even as he walked home from killing 'em, and he is a perfect gentleman and exceedingly amiable and simple-minded: no fool, though.

The climate is delightful; and the harbour where we lie one of the loveliest spots imaginable. Yesterday evening we had near a score natives on board; lovely parties. We have a native god; very rare now. Very rare and equally absurd to view.

This sort of work is not favourable to correspondence: it takes me all the little strength I have to go about and see, and then come home and note, the strangeness around us. I shouldn't wonder if there came trouble here some day, all the same. I could name a nation that is not beloved in certain islands—and it does not know it! Strange: like ourselves, perhaps, in India! Love to all and much to yourself.

R. L. S.

## To Charles Baxter

*Yacht* Casco, *at sea, near the Paumotus,*
7 A.M., *September 6th*, 1888, *with a dreadful pen*

MY DEAR CHARLES,—Last night as I lay under my blanket in the cockpit, courting sleep, I had a comic seizure. There was nothing visible but the southern stars, and the steersman there out by the binnacle lamp; we were all looking forward to a most deplorable landfall on the morrow, praying God we should fetch a tuft of palms which are to indicate the Dangerous Archipelago; the night was as warm as milk, and all of a sudden I had a vision of—Drummond Street. It came on me like a flash of lightning: I simply returned thither, and into the past. And when I remember all I hoped and feared as I pickled about Rutherford's in the rain and the east wind; how I feared I should make a mere shipwreck, and yet timidly hoped not; how I feared I should never have a friend, far less a wife, and yet passionately hoped I might; how I hoped (if I did not take to drink) I should possibly write one little book, etc. etc. And then now—what a change! I feel somehow as if I should like the incident set upon a brass plate at the corner of that dreary thoroughfare for all students to read, poor devils, when their hearts are down. And I felt I must write one word to you. Excuse me if I write little: when I am at sea, it gives me a headache; when I am in port, I have my diary crying 'Give, give.' I shall have a fine book of travels, I feel sure; and will tell you more of the South Seas after very few months than any other

writer has done—except Herman Melville perhaps, who is a howling cheese. Good luck to you, God bless you.—Your affectionate friend,

R. L. S.

## To Sidney Colvin

The signature used at foot of this letter and occasionally elsewhere, 'The Old Man Virulent,' alludes to the fits of uncontrollable anger to which he was often in youth, but by this time hardly ever, subject: fits occasioned sometimes by instances of official stolidity or impertinence or what he took for such, more often by acts savouring of cruelty, meanness, or injustice.

*Fakarava, Low Archipelago, September 21st*, 1888

MY DEAR COLVIN,—Only a word. Get out your big atlas, and imagine a straight line from San Francisco to Anaho, the N.E. corner of Nukahiva, one of the Marquesas Islands; imagine three weeks there: imagine a day's sail on August 12th round the eastern end of the island to Tai-o-hae, the capital; imagine us there till August 22nd: imagine us skirt the east side of Ua-pu—perhaps Rona-Poa on your atlas—and through the Bondelais straits to Taakauku in Hiva-Oa, where we arrive on the 23rd; imagine us there until September 4th, when we sailed for Fakarava, which we reached on the 9th, after a very difficult and dangerous passage among these isles. Tuesday, we shall leave for Taiti, where I shall knock off and do some necessary work ashore. It looks pretty bald in the atlas; not in fact; nor I trust in the 130 odd pages of diary which I have just been looking up for these dates: the interest, indeed, has been *incredible*: I did not dream there were

such places or such races. My health has stood me splendidly; I am in for hours wading over the knees for shells; I have been five hours on horseback: I have been up pretty near all night waiting to see where the *Casco* would go ashore, and with my diary all ready—simply the most entertaining night of my life. Withal I still have colds; I have one now, and feel pretty sick too; but not as at home: instead of being in bed, for instance, I am at this moment sitting snuffling and writing in an undershirt and trousers; and as for colour, hands, arms, feet, legs, and face, I am browner than the berry: only my trunk and the aristocratic spot on which I sit retain the vile whiteness of the north.

Please give my news and kind love to Henley, Henry James, and any whom you see of well-wishers. Accept from me the very best of my affection: and believe me ever yours,

THE OLD MAN VIRULENT

*Papeete, Taiti, October 7th,* 1888

Never having found a chance to send this off, I may add more of my news. My cold took a very bad turn, and I am pretty much out of sorts at this particular, living in a little bare one-twentieth-furnished house, surrounded by mangoes, etc. All the rest are well, and I mean to be soon. But these Taiti colds are very severe and, to children, often fatal; so they were not the thing for me. Yesterday the brigantine came in from San Francisco, so we can get our letters off soon. There are in Pa-

peete at this moment, in a little wooden house with grated verandahs, two people who love you very much, and one of them is

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## To Charles Baxter

*Taiti, as ever was, 6th October* 1888

MY DEAR CHARLES,— . . . You will receive a lot of mostly very bad proofs of photographs: the paper was so bad. Please keep them very private, as they are for the book. We send them, having learned so dread a fear of the sea, that we wish to put our eggs in different baskets. We have been thrice within an ace of being ashore: we were lost (!) for about twelve hours in the Low Archipelago, but by God's blessing had quiet weather all the time; and once, in a squall, we cam' so near gaun heels ower hurdies, that I really dinnae ken why we didnae a'thegither. Hence, as I say, a great desire to put our eggs in different baskets, particularly on the Pacific (aw-haw-haw) Pacific Ocean.

You can have no idea what a mean time we have had, owing to incidental beastlinesses, nor what a glorious, owing to the intrinsic interest of these isles. I hope the book will be a good one; nor do I really very much doubt that—the stuff is so curious; what I wonder is, if the public will rise to it. A copy of my journal, or as much of it as is made, shall go to you also; it is, of course, quite imperfect, much being to be added and corrected; but O, for the eggs in the different baskets.

All the rest are well enough, and all have enjoyed the cruise so far, in spite of its drawbacks. We have had an awfae time in some ways, Mr. Baxter; and if I wasnae sic a verra patient man (when I ken that I *have* to be) there wad hae been a braw row; and ance if I hadnae happened to be on deck about three in the marnin', I *think* there would have been *murder* done. The American Mairchant Marine is a kent service; ye'll have heard its praise, I'm thinkin'; an' if ye never did, ye can get *Twa Years Before the Mast*, by Dana, whaur forbye a great deal o' pleisure, ye'll get a' the needcessary information. Love to your father and all the family. —Ever your affectionate friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## TO MISS ADELAIDE BOODLE

This lady, as we have seen, had made Stevenson a present of a paper-cutter when he left Bournemouth; and it is in the character of the paper-cutter that he now writes.

*Taiti, October 10th*, 1888

DEAR GIVER,—I am at a loss to conceive your object in giving me to a person so locomotory as my proprietor. The number of thousand miles that I have travelled, the strange bed-fellows with which I have been made acquainted, I lack the requisite literary talent to make clear to your imagination. I speak of bed-fellows; pocket-fellows would be a more exact expression, for the place of my abode is in my master's right-hand trouser-pocket; and there, as he waded on the resounding beaches of Nukahiva, or in the shallow tepid water on the reef

of Fakarava, I have been overwhelmed by and buried among all manner of abominable South Sea shells, beautiful enough in their way, I make no doubt, but singular company for any self-respecting paper-cutter. He, my master—or as I more justly call him, my bearer; for although I occasionally serve him, does not he serve me daily and all day long, carrying me like an African potentate on my subject's legs?—*he* is delighted with these isles, and this climate, and these savages, and a variety of other things. He now blows a flageolet with singular effects: sometimes the poor thing appears stifled with shame, sometimes it screams with agony; he pursues his career with truculent insensibility. Health appears to reign in the party. I was very nearly sunk in a squall. I am sorry I ever left England, for here there are no books to be had, and without books there is no stable situation for, dear Giver, your affectionate

WOODEN PAPER-CUTTER

A neighbouring pair of scissors snips a kiss in your direction.

## To Sidney Colvin

The ballad referred to in the letter which follows is the *Feast of Famine*, published with others in the collection of 1890 *Ballads* (Chatto & Windus). I never very much admired his South Sea ballads for any quality except their narrative vigour, thinking them unequal and uncertain both in metre and style.

*Taiti, October 16th*, 1888

MY DEAR COLVIN,—The cruiser for San Francisco departs to-morrow morning bearing you some kind

of a scratch. This much more important packet will travel by way of Auckland. It contains a ballant; and I think a better ballant than I expected ever to do. I can imagine how you will wag your pow over it; and how ragged you will find it, etc., but has it not spirit all the same? and though the verse is not all your fancy painted it, has it not some life? And surely, as narrative, the thing has considerable merit! Read it, get a typewritten copy taken, and send me that and your opinion to the Sandwiches. I know I am only courting the most excruciating mortification; but the real cause of my sending the thing is that I could bear to go down myself, but not to have much MS. go down with me. To say truth, we are through the most dangerous; but it has left in all minds a strong sense of insecurity, and we are all for putting eggs in various baskets.

We leave here soon, bound for Uahiva, Raiatea, Bora-Bora, and the Sandwiches.

O, how my spirit languishes
To step ashore on the Sanguishes;
For there my letters wait,
There shall I know my fate.
O, how my spirit languidges
To step ashore on the Sanguidges.

18*th*.—I think we shall leave here if all is well on Monday. I am quite recovered, astonishingly recovered. It must be owned these climates and this voyage have given me more strength than I could have thought possible. And yet the sea is a terrible

place, stupefying to the mind and poisonous to the temper, the sea, the motion, the lack of space, the cruel publicity, the villainous tinned foods, the sailors, the captain, the passengers—but you are amply repaid when you sight an island, and drop anchor in a new world. Much trouble has attended this trip, but I must confess more pleasure. Nor should I ever complain, as in the last few weeks, with the curing of my illness indeed, as if that were the bursting of an abscess, the cloud has risen from my spirits and to some degree from my temper. Do you know what they called the *Casco* at Fakarava? The *Silver Ship*. Is that not pretty? Pray tell Mrs. Jenkin, *die silberne Frau*, as I only learned it since I wrote her. I think of calling the book by that name: *The Cruise of the Silver Ship*—so there will be one poetic page at least—the title. At the Sandwiches we shall say farewell to the *S. S.* with mingled feelings. She is a lovely creature: the most beautiful thing at this moment in Taiti.

Well, I will take another sheet, though I know I have nothing to say. You would think I was bursting; but the voyage is all stored up for the book, which is to pay for it, we fondly hope; and the troubles of the time are not worth telling; and our news is little.

Here I conclude (Oct. 24th, I think), for we are now stored, and the Blue Peter metaphorically flies.

R. L. S.

## To William and Thomas Archer

Stevenson addresses a part of this letter, as well as the whole of another later on, to a young son of Mr. Archer's, but rather to amuse himself than his nominal correspondent, who was then aged three.

*Taiti, October 17th,* 1888

DEAR ARCHER,—Though quite unable to write letters, I nobly send you a line signifying nothing. The voyage has agreed well with all; it has had its pains, and its extraordinary pleasures; nothing in the world can equal the excitement of the first time you cast anchor in some bay of a tropical island, and the boats begin to surround you, and the tattooed people swarm aboard. Tell Tomarcher, with my respex, that hide-and-seek is not equal to it; no, nor hidee-in-the-dark; which, for the matter of that, is a game for the unskilful: the artist prefers daylight, a good-sized garden, some shrubbery, an open paddock, and—come on, Macduff.

TOMARCHER, I am now a distinguished litterytour, but that was not the real bent of my genius. I was the best player of hide-and-seek going; not a good runner, I was up to every shift and dodge, I could jink very well, I could crawl without any noise through leaves, I could hide under a carrot plant, it used to be my favourite boast that I always *walked* into the den. You may care to hear, Tomarcher, about the children in these parts; their parents obey them, they do not obey their parents; and I am sorry to tell you (for I dare say you are already thinking the idea a good one) that it does not pay one halfpenny. There are three sorts of civilisation, Tom-

archer: the real old-fashioned one, in which children either had to find out how to please their dear papas or their dear papas cut their heads off. This style did very well, but is now out of fashion. Then the modern European style: in which children have to behave reasonably well, and go to school and say their prayers, or their dear papas *will know the reason why*. This does fairly well. Then there is the South Sea Island plan, which does not do one bit. The children beat their parents here; it does not make their parents any better; so do not try it.

Dear Tomarcher, I have forgotten the address of your new house, but will send this to one of your papa's publishers. Remember us all to all of you, and believe me, yours respectably,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## TO CHARLES BAXTER

*Tautira (The Garden of the World), otherwise called Hans-Christian-Andersen-ville* [*November* 1888]

MY DEAR CHARLES,—Whether I have a penny left in the wide world, I know not, nor shall know, till I get to Honolulu, where I anticipate a devil of an awakening. It will be from a mighty pleasant dream at least: Tautira being mere Heaven. But suppose, for the sake of argument, any money to be left in the hands of my painful doer, what is to be done with it? Save us from exile would be the wise man's choice, I suppose; for the exile threatens to be eternal. But yet I am of opinion—in case there should be *some* dibbs in the hand of the P.D., *i.e.*

painful doer; because if there be none, I shall take to my flageolet on the high-road, and work home the best way I can, having previously made away with my family—I am of opinion that if——and his are in the customary state, and you are thinking of an offering, and there should be still some funds over, you would be a real good P.D. to put some in with yours and tak' the credit o't, like a wee man! I know it's a beastly thing to ask; but it, after all, does no earthly harm, only that much good. And besides, like enough there's nothing in the till, and there is an end. Yet I live here in the full lustre of millions; it is thought I am the richest son of man that has yet been to Tautira: I!—and I am secretly eaten with the fear of lying in pawn, perhaps for the remainder of my days, in San Francisco. As usual, my colds have much hashed my finances.

Do tell Henley I write this just after having dismissed Ori the sub-chief, in whose house I live, Mrs. Ori, and Pairai, their adopted child, from the evening hour of music: during which I Publickly (with a k) Blow on the Flageolet. These are words of truth. Yesterday I told Ori about W. E. H., counterfeited his playing on the piano and the pipe, and succeeded in sending the six feet four there is of that sub-chief somewhat sadly to his bed; feeling that his was not the genuine article after all. Ori is exactly like a colonel in the Guards.—I am, dear Charles, ever yours affectionately,

R. L. S.

## To Charles Baxter

The stanzas which end this letter are well known, having been printed, with one additional, in *Songs of Travel*, but gain effect, I think, from being given here in their place.

*Tautira, 10th November '88*

MY DEAR CHARLES,—Our mainmast is dry-rotten, and we are all to the devil; I shall lie in a debtor's jail. Never mind, Tautira is first chop. I am so besotted that I shall put on the back of this my attempt at words to Wandering Willie; if you can conceive at all the difficulty, you will also conceive the vanity with which I regard any kind of result; and whatever mine is like, it has some sense, and Burns's has none.

Home no more home to me, whither must I wander?
Hunger my driver, I go where I must.
Cold blows the winter wind over hill and heather;
Thick drives the rain, and my roof is in the dust.
Loved of wise men was the shade of my roof-tree;
The true word of welcome was spoken in the door—
Dear days of old, with the faces in the firelight,
Kind folks of old, you come again no more.

Home was home then, my dear, full of kindly faces,
Home was home then, my dear, happy for the child.
Fire and the windows bright glittered on the moorland;
Song, tuneful song, built a palace in the wild.
Now, when day dawns on the brow of the moorland,
Lone stands the house, and the chimney-stone is cold.
Lone let it stand, now the friends are all departed,
The kind hearts, the true hearts, that loved the place of old.

R. L. S.

## To John Addington Symonds

The following is the draft of a proposed dedication to the South Sea travel-book which was to be the fruit of the present voyages, as is explained in a note at the end.

*November 11th*, 1888

*One November night, in the village of Tautira, we sat at the high table in the hall of assembly, hearing the natives sing. It was dark in the hall, and very warm; though at times the land wind blew a little shrewdly through the chinks, and at times, through the larger openings, we could see the moonlight on the lawn. As the songs arose in the rattling Tahitian chorus, the chief translated here and there a verse. Farther on in the volume you shall read the songs themselves; and I am in hopes that not you only, but all who can find a savour in the ancient poetry of places, will read them with some pleasure. You are to conceive us, therefore, in strange circumstances and very pleasing; in a strange land and climate, the most beautiful on earth; surrounded by a foreign race that all travellers have agreed to be the most engaging; and taking a double interest in two foreign arts.*

*We came forth again at last, in a cloudy moonlight, on the forest lawn which is the street of Tautira. The Pacific roared outside upon the reef. Here and there one of the scattered palm-built lodges shone out under the shadow of the wood, the lamplight bursting through the crannies of the wall. We went homeward slowly, Ori a Ori carrying behind us the lantern and the chairs, properties with which we had just been enacting our part of the distinguished visitor. It was one of those moments in which minds not al-*

*together churlish recall the names and deplore the absence of congenial friends; and it was your name that first rose upon our lips. 'How Symonds would have enjoyed this evening!' said one, and then another. The word caught in my mind; I went to bed, and it was still there. The glittering, frosty solitudes in which your days are cast arose before me: I seemed to see you walking there in the late night, under the pine-trees and the stars; and I received the image with something like remorse.*

*There is a modern attitude towards Fortune; in this place I will not use a graver name. Staunchly to withstand her buffets and to enjoy with equanimity her favours was the code of the virtuous of old. Our fathers, it should seem, wondered and doubted how they had merited their misfortunes: we, rather how we have deserved our happiness. And we stand often abashed, and sometimes revolted, at those partialities of fate by which we profit most. It was so with me on that November night: I felt that our positions should be changed. It was you, dear Symonds, who should have gone upon that voyage and written this account. With your rich stores of knowledge, you could have remarked and understood a thousand things of interest and beauty that escaped my ignorance; and the brilliant colours of your style would have carried into a thousand sickrooms the sea air and the strong sun of tropic islands. It was otherwise decreed. But suffer me at least to connect you, if only in name and only in the fondness of imagination, with the voyage of the* Silver Ship.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

DEAR SYMONDS,—I send you this (November 11th) the morning of its completion. If I ever write an account of this voyage, may I place this letter at the beginning? It represents—I need not tell you, for you too are an artist—a most genuine feeling, which kept me long awake last night; and though perhaps a little elaborate, I think it a good piece of writing. We are *in heaven here*. Do not forget.

R. L. S.

Please keep this: I have no perfect copy.
*Tautira, on the peninsula of Taiti.*

## To Thomas Archer

*Tautira, Island of Taiti* [*November* 1888]

DEAR TOMARCHER,—This is a pretty state of things! seven o'clock and no word of breakfast! And I was awake a good deal last night, for it was full moon, and they had made a great fire of cocoa-nut husks down by the sea, and as we have no blinds or shutters, this kept my room very bright. And then the rats had a wedding or a school-feast under my bed. And then I woke early, and I have nothing to read except Virgil's *Æneid*, which is not good fun on an empty stomach, and a Latin dictionary, which is good for naught, and by some humorous accident, your dear papa's article on Skerryvore. And I read the whole of that, and very impudent it is, but you must not tell your dear papa I said so, or it might come to a battle in which you might lose either a dear papa or a valued correspondent, or both,

which would be prodigal. And still no breakfast; so I said 'Let's write to Tomarcher.'

This is a much better place for children than any I have hitherto seen in these seas. The girls (and sometimes the boys) play a very elaborate kind of hopscotch. The boys play horses exactly as we do in Europe; and have very good fun on stilts, trying to knock each other down, in which they do not often succeed. The children of all ages go to church and are allowed to do what they please, running about the aisles, rolling balls, stealing mamma's bonnet and publicly sitting on it, and at last going to sleep in the middle of the floor. I forgot to say that the whips to play horses, and the balls to roll about the church—at least I never saw them used elsewhere—grow ready made on trees; which is rough on toy-shops. The whips are so good that I wanted to play horses myself; but no such luck! my hair is grey, and I am a great, big, ugly man. The balls are rather hard, but very light and quite round. When you grow up and become offensively rich, you can charter a ship in the port of London, and have it come back to you entirely loaded with these balls; when you could satisfy your mind as to their character, and give them away when done with to your uncles and aunts. But what I really wanted to tell you was this: besides the tree-top toys (Hush-a-by, toy-shop, on the tree-top!), I have seen some real *made* toys, the first hitherto observed in the South Seas.

This was how. You are to imagine a four-wheeled gig; one horse; in the front seat two Tahiti natives,

in their Sunday clothes, blue coat, white shirt, kilt (a little longer than the Scotch) of a blue stuff with big white or yellow flowers, legs and feet bare; in the back seat me and my wife, who is a friend of yours; under our feet, plenty of lunch and things: among us a great deal of fun in broken Tahitian, one of the natives, the sub-chief of the village, being a great ally of mine. Indeed we have exchanged names; so that he is now called Rui, the nearest they can come to Louis, for they have no *l* and no *s* in their language. Rui is six feet three in his stockings, and a magnificent man. We all have straw hats, for the sun is strong. We drive between the sea, which makes a great noise, and the mountains; the road is cut through a forest mostly of fruit trees, the very creepers, which take the place of our ivy, heavy with a great and delicious fruit, bigger than your head and far nicer, called Barbedine. Presently we came to a house in a pretty garden, quite by itself, very nicely kept, the doors and windows open, no one about, and no noise but that of the sea. It looked like a house in a fairy-tale, and just beyond we must ford a river, and there we saw the inhabitants. Just in the mouth of the river, where it met the sea waves, they were ducking and bathing and screaming together like a covey of birds: seven or eight little naked brown boys and girls as happy as the day was long: and on the banks of the stream beside them, real toys—toy ships, full rigged, and with their sails set, though they were lying in the dust on their beam ends. And then I knew for sure they were all children in a fairy-story, living alone together in

that lonely house with the only toys in all the island; and that I had myself driven, in my four-wheeled gig, into a corner of the fairy-story, and the question was should I get out again? But it was all right; I guess only one of the wheels of the gig had got into the fairy-story; and the next jolt the whole thing vanished, and we drove on in our sea-side forest as before, and I have the honour to be Tomarcher's valued correspondent, TERIITERA, which he was previously known as

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

[MRS. R. L. STEVENSON TO SIDNEY COLVIN

This letter from Mrs. Stevenson serves to fill out and explain allusions in the three or four preceding. The beautiful brown princess is Princess Moë, ex-queen of Raiatea, well known to readers of Pierre Loti and Miss Gordon Cumming. The move away from Papeete, where Stevenson had fallen seriously ill, had been made in hopes of finding on the island a climate that would suit him better.

*Tautira, Tahiti, Dec. 4th* [1888]

DEAR, long neglected, though never forgotten Custodian, I write you from fairyland, where we are living in a fairy story, the guests of a beautiful brown princess. We came to stay a week, five weeks have passed, and we are still indefinite as to our time of leaving. It was chance brought us here, for no one in Papeete could tell us a word about this part of the island except that it was very fine to look at, and inhabitated by wild people—'almost as wild as the people of Anaho!' That touch about the people of Anaho inclined our hearts this way, so we finally

concluded to take a look at the other side of Tahiti. The place of our landing was windy, uninhabited except by mosquitoes, and Louis was ill. The first day Lloyd and the Captain made an exploration, but came back disgusted. They had found a Chinaman, a long way off, who seemed to have some horses, but no desire to hire them to strangers, and they had found nothing else whatever. The next morning I took Valentine and went on a prospecting tour of my own. I found the Chinaman, persuaded him to let me have two horses and a wagon, and went back for the rest of my family. When asked where I wished to go, I could only say to the largest native village and the most wild. Ill as Louis was, I brought him the next day, and shall never cease to be thankful for my courage, for he has gained health and strength every day. He takes sea baths and swims, and lives almost entirely in the open air as nearly without clothes as possible, a simple pyjama suit of striped light flannel his only dress. As to shoes and stockings we all have scorned them for months except Mrs. Stevenson, who often goes barefoot and never, I believe, wears stockings. Lloyd's costume, in which he looks remarkably well, consists of a striped flannel shirt and a pareu. The pareu is no more or less than a large figured blue and white cotton window curtain twisted about the waist, and hanging a little below the bare knees. Both Louis and Lloyd wear wreaths of artificial flowers, made of the dried pandanus leaf, on their hats.

Moë has gone to Papeete by the command of the king, whose letter was addressed 'To the great

Princess at Tautira. P.V.' P. V. stands for Pomaré 5th. Every evening, before she went, we played Van John lying in a circle on pillows in the middle of the floor with our heads together: and hardly an evening passed but it struck us afresh how very much you would like Moë, and we told her of you again. The house (really here a palace) in which we live, belongs to the sub-chief, Ori, a subject and relation of the Princess. He, and his whole family, consisting of his wife, his two little adopted sons, his daughter and her two young babies, turned out to live in a little bird-cage hut of one room. Ori is the very finest specimen of a native we have seen yet; he is several inches over six feet, of perfect though almost gigantic proportions, and looks more like a Roman Emperor in bronze than words can express. One day, when Moë gave a feast, it being the correct thing to do, we all wore wreaths of golden yellow leaves on our heads; when Ori walked in and sat down at the table, as with one voice we all cried out in admiration. His manners and I might say his habit of thought are English. In some ways, he is so like a Colonel of the Guards that we often call him Colonel. It was either the day before, or the morning of our public feast, that Louis asked the Princess if she thought Ori would accept his name. She was sure of it, and much pleased at the idea. I wish you could have seen Louis, blushing like a schoolgirl, when Ori came in, and the brotherhood was offered. So now if you please, Louis is no more Louis, having given that name away in the Tahitian form of *Rui*, but is known as *Terii-Tera*

(pronounced Tereeterah) that being Ori's Christian name. 'Ori of Ori' is his clan name.

Let me tell you of our village feast. The chief, who was our guide in the matter, found four large fat hogs, which Louis bought, and four cases of ship's biscuit were sent over from the *Casco*, which is lying at Papeete for repairs. Our feast cost in all about eighty dollars. Every Sunday all things of public interest are announced in the Farehau (an enormous public bird cage) and the news of the week read aloud from the Papeete journal, if it happens to turn up. Our feast was given on a Wednesday, and was announced by the chief the Sunday before, who referred to Louis as 'the rich one.' Our hogs were killed in the morning, washed in the sea, and roasted whole in a pit with hot stones. When done they were laid on their stomachs in neat open coffins of green basket work, each hog with his case of biscuits beside him. Early in the morning the entire population began bathing, a bath being the preliminary to everything. At about three o'clock—four was the hour set—there was a general movement towards our premises, so that I had to hurry Louis into his clothes, all white, even to his shoes. Lloyd was also in white, but barefoot. I was not prepared, so had to appear in a red and white muslin gown, also barefoot. As Mrs. Stevenson had had a feast of her own, conducted on religious principles, she kept a little in the background, so that her dress did not matter so much. The chief, who speaks French very well, stood beside Louis to interpret for him. By the time we had taken our respective

places on the veranda in front of our door, an immense crowd had assembled. They came in five, instead of four detachments which was what the chief expected, and he was a little confused at first, as he and Louis had been arranging a speech to four sets of people, which ran in this order. The clergyman at the head of the Protestants: the chief, council, and irreligious:—one of the council at their head. The schoolmaster with the schoolchildren: the catechist and the Catholics: but there was another very small sect, by some strange mischance called Mormons, which it was supposed would be broken up and swallowed by the others. But no, the Mormons came in a body alone, marshalled by the best and wittiest speaker—bar Rui—in Tautira. Each set of people came bending under the weight of bamboo poles laden with fruits, pigs, fowls, etc. All were dressed in their gayest parius, and many had wreaths of leaves or flowers on their heads. The prettiest sight of all was the children, who came marching two and two abreast, the bamboo poles lying lengthwise across their shoulders.

When all the offerings had been piled in five great heaps upon the ground, Louis made his oration to the accompaniment of the squealing of pigs, the cackling of hens, and the roar of the surf which beats man-high upon the roof. A speech was made in return on behalf of the village, and then each section sent forth its orator, the speeches following in the order I have given above. Each speaker finished by coming forward with one of the smaller things in his hand, which he offered personally to Louis, and then

shook hands with us all and retired. Among these smaller presents were many fish-hooks for large fishing, laboriously carved from mother-of-pearl shell. One man came with one egg in each hand saying, 'carry these to Scotland with you, let them hatch into cocks, and their song shall remind you of Tautira.' The schoolmaster, with a leaf-basket of rose apples, made his speech in French. Somehow the whole effect of the scene was like a story out of the Bible, and I am not ashamed that Louis and I both shed tears when we saw the enchanting procession of schoolchildren. The Catholic priest, Father Bruno, a great friend of ours, said that for the next fifty years the time of the feast of the rich one will be talked of: which reminds me of our friend Donat, of Fakarava, who was temporary resident at the time we were there. 'I am so glad,' he said, 'that the *Casco* came in just now, otherwise I should be forgotten: but now the people will always say this or that happened so long before—or so long after—the coming of the *Silver Ship*, when Donat represented the government.'

In front of our house is a broad stretch of grass, dotted with cocoanuts, breadfruits, mangoes, and the strange pandanus tree. I wish you could have seen them, their lower branches glowing with the rich colours of the fruits hung upon them by Ori and his men, and great heaps lying piled against their roots, on the evening of our feast. From the bamboo poles that they were carried upon, a pen was made for the ten pigs, and a fowl house for the twenty-three fowls that were among the presents. But there was a

day of reckoning at hand. Time after time we ran down to the beach to look for the *Casco*, until we were in despair. For over a month we had lived in Ori's house, causing him infinite trouble and annoyance, and not even his, at that. Areia (the chief—means the Prince) went to Papeete and came back with a letter to say that more work had to be done upon the *Casco*, and it might be any time before she could get to Tautira. We had used up all our stores, and had only a few dollars of money left in Tautira, and not very much in Papeete. Could we stand the journey to Papeete, we could not live upon the yacht in the midst of the workmen, and we had not money enough left to live at an hotel. We were playing cards on the floor, as usual, when this message came, and you can imagine its effect. I knew perfectly well that Rui would force us to stay on with him, but what depressed me the most of all, was the fact of Louis having made brothers with him just before this took place. Had there been a shadow of doubt on our dear Rui's face, I should have fled from before him. Sitting there on the floor waiting for him was too much for my nerves and I burst into tears, upon which the princess wept bitterly. In the meantime the priest had dropped in, so that we had him and Moë, and Areia, as witnesses to our humiliating position. First came Madame Rui, who heard the story, and sat down on the floor in silence, which was very damping for a beginning, and then Ori of Ori, the magnificent, who listened to the tale of the shipwrecked mariners with serious dignity, asking one or two questions, and then spoke to this

effect. 'You are my brother: all that I have is yours. I know that your food is done, but I can give you plenty of fish and taro. We like you, and wish to have you here. Stay where you are till the *Casco* comes. Be happy—*et ne pleurez pas*.' Louis dropped his head into his hands and wept, and then we all went up to Rui and shook hands with him and accepted his offer. Madame Rui, who had been silent only as a dutiful wife, that her husband might speak first, poured forth manifold reasons for our staying on as long as we could possibly manage. During all this scene, an attendant of the princess had been sitting on the floor behind us, a baby in his arms, where he had ensconced himself for the purpose of watching the game. He understood nothing of what was going on; we wondered afterwards what he thought of it. Reduced as we were, we still had a few bottles of champagne left. Champagne being an especial weakness of our gigantic friend, it occurred to some one that this was a proper occasion to open a couple of bottles. Louis, the Princess, and I were quite, as the Scotch so well say, 'begrutten,' Areia's immense eyes were fairly melting out of his head with emotion, the priest was wiping his eyes and blowing his nose: and then for no apparent cause we suddenly fell to drinking and clinking glasses quite merrily: the bewildered attendant clinked and drank too, and then sat down and waited in case there should be any repetition of the drinking part of the performance. And sure enough there was, for in the midst of an animated discussion as to ways and means, Mrs. Stevenson

announced that it was St. Andrew's day, so again the attendant clinked and drank with Ori's mad foreigners.

It is quite true that we live almost entirely upon native food; our luncheon to-day consisted of raw fish with sauce made of cocoanut milk mixed with sea water and lime juice, taro poi-poi, and bananas roasted in hot stones in a little pit in the ground, with cocoanut cream to eat with them. Still we like coffee in the evening, a little wine at dinner, and a few other products of civilisation. It would be possible, the chief said, to send a boat, but that would cost sixty dollars. A final arrangement, which we were forced to accept, was that Rui should go in his own boat, and the chief would appoint a substitute for some public work that he was then engaged upon. Early the next morning, amidst a raging sea and a storming wind, Rui departed with three men to help him. It is forty miles to Papeete, and Rui, starting in the early morning, arrived there at nine o'clock; but alas, the wind was against him, and it was altogether six days before he got back.

Louis has done a great deal of work on his new story, *The Master of Ballantrae*, almost finished it in fact, while Mrs. Stevenson and I are deep in the mysteries of hatmaking, which is a ladies' accomplishment taking the place of water-colour drawing in England. It is a small compliment to present a hat to an acquaintance. Altogether we have about thirteen. Next door to us is Areia's out-of-door house, where he and the ladies of his family sleep and eat; it has a thatched roof of palm branches. and a

floor of boards, the sides and ends being open to the world. On the floor are spread mats plaited of pandanus leaves, and pillows stuffed with silk cotton from the cotton tree. We make little calls upon the ladies, lie upon the mats, and smoke cigarettes made of tobacco leaves rolled in a bit of dried pandanus, and admire their work, or get a lesson; or they call upon us, and lie upon our mats. One day there was an election in the Farehau. It takes place all over the island once a year, and among others, the sub-chief and head-councillor is chosen. For the latter, our Rui was a candidate. In the beginning, the French deposed the born chiefs and told the people to elect men for themselves. The choice of Tautira fell upon Rui, who declined the honour, saying that Areia was his natural chief, and he could not take a position that should belong to his superior; upon which the people elected Areia chief, and Rui sub-chief and head-councillor. We all went over to the Farehau, where Areia sat in the middle of his councillors on a dais behind a long table. The Farehau is an immense bird-cage of bamboos tied together with pandanus fibre, and thatched with palms. In front of the dais the ground is deeply covered with dried leaves. The costume of the dignitaries was rather odd. Areia wore a white shirt and blue flannel coat, which was well enough; but on his plump legs were a pair of the most incredible trousers: light blue calico with a small red pattern, such as servant girls wear for gowns in England: on his feet were neat little shoes and stockings. Rui was a fine sight, and we were very proud of him; he sat, exactly like an English gentleman, holding himself

well in hand, alert as a fox and keen as a greyhound: several men spoke from the farther end of the hall, making objections of some sort, we could see. Rui listened with a half satirical, half kindly smile in his eyes, and then dropped a quiet answer without rising from his seat, which had the effect of raising a shout of laughter, and quite demolishing his opponent. Voters came up to the table and dropped their bits of paper into a slit in a box: some led children by the hand, and some carried babies in their arms; across the centre of the great room children and dogs ran chasing each other and playing. I noticed two little maids who walked up and down for a long time with their arms intertwined about each other's waists. Near where we sat (we were on the dais, above the common herd), a pretty young lady having tied up her dog's mouth with a tuft of grass, industriously caught and cracked fleas from its back. Both Lloyd and I grew very sleepy, and as we did not like to leave till the election was decided, we just threw ourselves down and took a nap at the feet of the councillors: nor did we wake till the chief called out to us in English 'it is finished.' I never thought I should be able to calmly sleep at a public meeting on a platform in the face of several hundred people: but it is wonderful how quickly one takes up the ways of a people when you live with them as intimately as we do.

I hear dinner coming on the table, so with much love from us all to you and other dear ones, including our dear friend Henry James, believe me, affectionately yours,

FANNY V. de G. STEVENSON.

## To Sidney Colvin

*Yacht* Casco, *at Sea, 14th January,* 1889

MY DEAR COLVIN,—Twenty days out from Papeete. Yes, sir, all that, and only (for a guess) in 4° north or at the best 4°30′, though already the wind seems to smell a little of the North Pole. My handwriting you must take as you get, for we are speeding along through a nasty swell, and I can only keep my place at the table by means of a foot against the divan, the unoccupied hand meanwhile gripping the ink-bottle. As we begin (so very slowly) to draw near to seven months of correspondence, we are all in some fear; and I want to have letters written before I shall be plunged into that boiling pot of disagreeables which I constantly expect at Honolulu. What is needful can be added there.

We were kept two months at Tautira in the house of my dear old friend, Ori a Ori, till both the masts of this invaluable yacht had been repaired. It was all for the best; Tautira being the most beautiful spot, and its people the most amiable, I have ever found. Besides which, the climate suited me to the ground; I actually went sea-bathing almost every day, and in our feasts (we are all huge eaters in Taiarapu) have been known to apply four times for pig. And then again I got wonderful materials for my book, collected songs and legends on the spot; songs still sung in chorus by perhaps a hundred persons, not two of whom can agree on their translation; legends, on which I have seen half a dozen seniors sitting in conclave and debating what came

next. Once I went a day's journey to the other side of the island to Tati, the high chief of the Tevas—*my* chief that is, for I am now a Teva and Teriitera, at your service—to collect more and correct what I had already. In the meanwhile I got on with my work, almost finished *The Master of Ballantrae*, which contains more human work than anything of mine but *Kidnapped*, and wrote the half of another ballad, the *Song of Rahero*, on a Taiarapu legend of my own clan, sir—not so much fire as the *Feast of Famine*, but promising to be more even and correct. But the best fortune of our stay at Tautira was my knowledge of Ori himself, one of the finest creatures extant. The day of our parting was a sad one. We deduced from it a rule for travellers: not to stay two months in one place—which is to cultivate regrets.

At last our contemptible ship was ready; to sea we went, bound for Honolulu and the letter-bag, on Christmas Day; and from then to now have experienced every sort of minor misfortune, squalls, calms, contrary winds and seas, pertinacious rains, declining stores, till we came almost to regard ourselves as in the case of Vanderdecken. Three days ago our luck seemed to improve, we struck a leading breeze, got creditably through the doldrums, and just as we looked to have the N.E. trades and a straight run, the rains and squalls and calms began again about midnight, and this morning, though there is breeze enough to send us along, we are beaten back by an obnoxious swell out of the north. Here is a page of complaint, when a verse of thanksgiving had perhaps been more in place. For all this time we must

have been skirting past dangerous weather, in the tail and circumference of hurricanes, and getting only annoyance where we should have had peril, and ill-humour instead of fear.

I wonder if I have managed to give you any news this time, or whether the usual damn hangs over my letter? 'The midwife whispered, Be thou dull!' or at least inexplicit. Anyway I have tried my best, am exhausted with the effort, and fall back into the land of generalities. I cannot tell you how often we have planned our arrival at the Monument: two nights ago, the 12th January, we had it all planned out, arrived in the lights and whirl of Waterloo, hailed a hansom, span up Waterloo Road, over the bridge, etc. etc., and hailed the Monument gate in triumph and with indescribable delight. My dear Custodian, I always think we are too sparing of assurances: Cordelia is only to be excused by Regan and Goneril in the same nursery; I wish to tell you that the longer I live, the more dear do you become to me; nor does my heart own any stronger sentiment. If the bloody schooner didn't send me flying in every sort of direction at the same time, I would say better what I feel so much; but really, if you were here, you would not be writing letters, I believe; and even I, though of a more marine constitution, am much perturbed by this bobbery and wish—O ye Gods, how I wish!—that it was done, and we had arrived, and I had Pandora's Box (my mail-bag) in hand, and was in the lively hope of something eatable for dinner instead of salt horse, tinned mutton, duff without any plums, and pie fruit, which

now make up our whole repertory. O Pandora's Box! I wonder what you will contain. As like as not you will contain but little money: if that be so, we shall have to retire to 'Frisco in the *Casco*, and thence by sea *via* Panama to Southampton, where we should arrive in April. I would like fine to see you on the tug: ten years older both of us than the last time you came to welcome Fanny and me to England. If we have money, however, we shall do a little differently: send the *Casco* away from Honolulu empty of its high-born lessees, for that voyage to 'Frisco is one long dead beat in foul and at last in cold weather; stay awhile behind, follow by steamer, cross the States by train, stay awhile in New York on business, and arrive probably by the German Line in Southampton. But all this is a question of money. We shall have to lie very dark awhile to recruit our finances: what comes from the book of the cruise, I do not want to touch until the capital is repaid.

R. L. S.

## To E. L. Burlingame

*Honolulu, January* 1889

MY DEAR BURLINGAME,—Here at last I have arrived. We could not get away from Tahiti till Christmas Day, and then had thirty days of calms and squalls, a deplorable passage. This has thrown me all out of gear in every way. I plunge into business.

1. *The Master.* Herewith go three more parts. You see he grows in bulk; this making ten already, and I am not sure yet if I can finish it in an eleventh;

which shall go to you *quam primum*—I hope by next mail.

2. *Illustrations to M.* I totally forgot to try to write to Hole. It was just as well, for I find it impossible to forecast with sufficient precision. You had better throw off all this and let him have it at once. *Please do: all, and at once: see further*; and I should hope he would still be in time for the later numbers. The three pictures I have received are so truly good that I should bitterly regret having the volume imperfectly equipped. They are the best illustrations I have seen since I don't know when.

3. *Money.* To-morrow the mail comes in, and I hope it will bring me money either from you or home, but I will add a word on that point.

4. My address will be Honolulu—no longer Yacht *Casco*, which I am packing off—till probably April.

5. As soon as I am through with *The Master*, I shall finish *The Game of Bluff*—now rechristened *The Wrong Box*. This I wish to sell, cash down. It is of course copyright in the States; and I offer it to you for five thousand dollars. Please reply on this by return. Also please tell the typewriter who was so good as to be amused by our follies that I am filled with admiration for his piece of work.

6. *Master* again. Please see that I haven't the name of the Governor of New York wrong (1764 is the date) in part ten. I have no book of reference to put me right. Observe you now have up to August inclusive in hand, so you should begin to feel happy.

Is this all? I wonder, and fear not. Henry the

Trader has not yet turned up: I hope he may to-morrow, when we expect a mail. Not one word of business have I received either from the States or England, nor anything in the shape of coin; which leaves me in a fine uncertainty and quite penniless on these islands. H.M.[1] (who is a gentleman of a courtly order and much tinctured with letters) is very polite; I may possibly ask for the position of palace doorkeeper. My voyage has been a singular mixture of good and ill fortune. As far as regards interest and material, the fortune has been admirable; as far as regards time, money, and impediments of all kinds, from squalls and calms to rotten masts and sprung spars, simply detestable. I hope you will be interested to hear of two volumes on the wing. The cruise itself, you are to know, will make a big volume with appendices; some of it will first appear as (what they call) letters in some of M'Clure's papers. I believe the book when ready will have a fair measure of serious interest: I have had great fortune in finding old songs and ballads and stories, for instance, and have many singular instances of life in the last few years among these islands.

The second volume is of ballads. You know *Ticonderoga*. I have written another: *The Feast of Famine*, a Marquesan story. A third is half done; *The Song of Rahero*, a genuine Tahitian legend. A fourth dances before me. A Hawaiian fellow this, *The Priest's Drought*, or some such name. If, as I half suspect, I get enough subjects out of the islands, *Ticonderoga* shall be suppressed, and we'll call the

[1] King Kalakaua.

volume *South Sea Ballads*. In health, spirits, renewed interest in life, and, I do believe, refreshed capacity for work, the cruise has proved a wise folly. Still we're not home, and (although the friend of a crowned head) are penniless upon these (as one of my correspondents used to call them) 'lovely but *fatil* islands.' By the way, who wrote the *Lion of the Nile*? My dear sir, that is Something Like. Overdone in bits, it has a true thought and a true ring of language. Beg the anonymous from me, to delete (when he shall republish) the two last verses, and end on 'the lion of the Nile.' One Lampman has a good sonnet on a 'Winter Evening' in, I think, the same number: he seems ill named, but I am tempted to hope a man is not always answerable for his name.[1] For instance, you would think you knew mine. No such matter. It is—at your service and Mr. Scribner's and that of all of the faithful—Teriitera (pray pronounce Tayree-Tayra) or (*gallicê*) Téri-téra.

R. L. S.

More when the mail shall come.

I am an idiot. I want to be clear on one point. Some of Hole's drawings must of course be too late; and yet they seem to me so excellent I would fain have the lot complete. It is one thing for you to pay for drawings which are to appear in that soul-swallowing machine, your magazine: quite another if they are only to illustrate a volume. I wish you to take a brisk (even a fiery) decision on the point; and let Hole know. To resume my desultory song,

[1] This is the Canadian poet Archibald Lampman (d. 1899).

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I desire you would carry the same fire (hereinbefore suggested) into your decision on *The Wrong Box*; for in my present state of benighted ignorance as to my affairs for the last seven months—I know not even whether my house or my mother's house have been let—I desire to see something definite in front of me—outside the lot of palace doorkeeper. I believe the said *Wrong Box* is a real lark; in which, of course, I may be grievously deceived; but the typewriter is with me. I may also be deceived as to the numbers of *The Master* now going and already gone; but to me they seem First Chop, sir, First Chop. I hope I shall pull off that damned ending; but it still depresses me: this is your doing, Mr. Burlingame: you would have it there and then, and I fear it—I fear that ending.

R. L. S.

## To Charles Baxter

*Honolulu, February* 8th, 1889

MY DEAR CHARLES,—Here we are at Honolulu, and have dismissed the yacht, and lie here till April anyway, in a fine state of haze, which I am yet in hopes some letter of yours (still on the way) may dissipate. No money, and not one word as to money! However, I have got the yacht paid off in triumph, I think; and though we stay here impignorate, it should not be for long, even if you bring us no extra help from home. The cruise has been a great success, both as to matter, fun, and health; and yet, Lord, man! we're pleased to be ashore! Yon was a very fine voyage from Tahiti up here, but—the dry land's

a fine place too, and we don't mind squalls any longer, and eh, man, that's a great thing. Blow, blow, thou wintry wind, thou hast done me no appreciable harm beyond a few grey hairs! Altogether, this foolhardy venture is achieved; and if I have but nine months of life and any kind of health, I shall have both eaten my cake and got it back again with usury. But, man, there have been days when I felt guilty, and thought I was in no position for the head of a house.

Your letter and accounts are doubtless at S. F. and will reach me in course. My wife is no great shakes; she is the one who has suffered most. My mother has had a Huge Old Time; Lloyd is first chop; I so well that I do not know myself—sea-bathing, if you please, and what is far more dangerous, entertaining and being entertained by His Majesty here, who is a very fine intelligent fellow, but O, Charles! what a crop for the drink! He carries it, too, like a mountain with a sparrow on its shoulders. We calculated five bottles of champagne in three hours and a half (afternoon), and the sovereign quite presentable, although perceptibly more dignified at the end. . . .

The extraordinary health I enjoy and variety of interests I find among these islands would tempt me to remain here; only for Lloyd, who is not well placed in such countries for a permanency; and a little for Colvin, to whom I feel I owe a sort of filial duty. And these two considerations will no doubt bring me back—to go to bed again—in England.—Yours ever affectionately,

R. L. S.

## To R. A. M. Stevenson

*Honolulu, Hawaiian Islands,*
*February* 1889

MY DEAR BOB,—My extremely foolhardy venture is practically over. How foolhardy it was I don't think I realised. We had a very small schooner, and, like most yachts, over-rigged and over-sparred, and like many American yachts on a very dangerous sail plan. The waters we sailed in are, of course, entirely unlighted, and very badly charted; in the Dangerous Archipelago, through which we were fools enough to go, we were perfectly in ignorance of where we were for a whole night and half the next day, and this in the midst of invisible islands and rapid and variable currents; and we were lucky when we found our whereabouts at last. We have twice had all we wanted in the way of squalls; once, as I came on deck, I found the green sea over the cockpit coamings and running down the companion like a brook to meet me; at that same moment the foresail sheet jammed and the captain had no knife; this was the only occasion on the cruise that ever I set a hand to a rope, but I worked like a Trojan, judging the possibility of hemorrhage better than the certainty of drowning. Another time I saw a rather singular thing: our whole ship's company as pale as paper from the captain to the cook; we had a black squall astern on the port side and a white squall ahead to starboard; the complication passed off innocuous, the black squall only fetching us with its tail, and the white one slewing

off somewhere else. Twice we were a long while (days) in the close vicinity of hurricane weather, but again luck prevailed, and we saw none of it. These are dangers incident to these seas and small craft. What was an amazement, and at the same time a powerful stroke of luck, both our masts were rotten, and we found it out—I was going to say in time, but it was stranger and luckier than that. The head of the mainmast hung over so that hands were afraid to go to the helm; and less than three weeks before —I am not sure it was more than a fortnight—we had been nearly twelve hours beating off the lee shore of Eimeo (or Moorea, next island to Tahiti) in half a gale of wind with a violent head sea: she would neither tack nor wear once, and had to be boxed off with the mainsail—you can imagine what an ungodly show of kites we carried—and yet the mast stood. The very day after that, in the southern bight of Tahiti, we had a near squeak, the wind suddenly coming calm; the reefs were close in with, my eye! what a surf! The pilot thought we were gone, and the captain had a boat cleared, when a lucky squall came to our rescue. My wife, hearing the order given about the boats, remarked to my mother, 'Isn't that nice? We shall soon be ashore!' Thus does the female mind unconsciously skirt along the verge of eternity. Our voyage up here was most disastrous—calms, squalls, head sea, waterspouts of rain, hurricane weather all about, and we in the midst of the hurricane season, when even the hopeful builder and owner of the yacht had pronounced these seas unfit for her. We ran out of food, and

were quite given up for lost in Honolulu: people had ceased to speak to Belle[1] about the *Casco*, as a deadly subject.

But the perils of the deep were part of the programme; and though I am very glad to be done with them for a while and comfortably ashore, where a squall does not matter a snuff to any one, I feel pretty sure I shall want to go to sea again ere long. The dreadful risk I took was financial, and double-headed. First, I had to sink a lot of money in the cruise, and if I didn't get health, how was I to get it back? I have got health to a wonderful extent; and as I have the most interesting matter for my book, bar accidents, I ought to get all I have laid out and a profit. But, second (what I own I never considered till too late), there was the danger of collisions, of damages and heavy repairs, of disablement, towing, and salvage; indeed, the cruise might have turned round and cost me double. Nor will this danger be quite over till I hear the yacht is in San Francisco; for though I have shaken the dust of her deck from my feet, I fear (as a point of law) she is still mine till she gets there.

From my point of view, up to now the cruise has been a wonderful success. I never knew the world was so amusing. On the last voyage we had grown so used to sea-life that no one wearied, though it lasted a full month, except Fanny, who is always ill. All the time our visits to the islands have been more

[1] Stevenson's stepdaughter, Mrs. Strong, who was at this time living at Honolulu, and joined his party and family for good when they continued their voyage from thence in the following June.

like dreams than realities: the people, the life, the beachcombers, the old stories and songs I have picked up, so interesting; the climate, the scenery, and (in some places) the women, so beautiful. The women are handsomest in Tahiti, the men in the Marquesas; both as fine types as can be imagined. Lloyd reminds me, I have not told you one characteristic incident of the cruise from a semi-naval point of view. One night we were going ashore in Anaho Bay; the most awful noise on deck; the breakers distinctly audible in the cabin; and there I had to sit below, entertaining in my best style a negroid native chieftain, much the worse for rum! You can imagine the evening's pleasure.

This naval report on cruising in the South Seas would be incomplete without one other trait. On our voyage up here I came one day into the dining-room, the hatch in the floor was open, the ship's boy was below with a baler, and two of the hands were carrying buckets as for a fire; this meant that the pumps had ceased working.

One stirring day was that in which we sighted Hawaii. It blew fair, but very strong; we carried jib, foresail, and mainsail, all single-reefed, and she carried her lee rail under water and flew. The swell the heaviest I have ever been out in—I tried in vain to estimate the height, *at least* fifteen feet—came tearing after us about a point and a half off the wind. We had the best hand—old Louis—at the wheel; and, really, he did nobly, and had noble luck, for it never caught us once. At times it seemed we must have it; old Louis would look over his shoulder with

the queerest look and dive down his neck into his shoulders; and then it missed us somehow, and only sprays came over our quarter, turning the little outside lane of deck into a mill race as deep as to the cockpit coamings. I never remember anything more delightful and exciting. Pretty soon after we were lying absolutely becalmed under the lee of Hawaii, of which we had been warned; and the captain never confessed he had done it on purpose, but when accused, he smiled. Really, I suppose he did quite right, for we stood committed to a dangerous race, and to bring her to the wind would have been rather a heart-sickening manœuvre.

R. L. S.

## To Marcel Schwob

At Honolulu, Stevenson found awaiting him, among the accumulations of the mail-bag, two letters of friendly homage—the first, I think, he had received from any foreign *confrère*—addressed to him by the distinguished young French scholar and man of letters, M. Marcel Schwob, since deceased.

*Honolulu, Sandwich Islands, February 8th,* 1889

DEAR SIR,—I thank you—from the midst of such a flurry as you can imagine, with seven months' accumulated correspondence on my table—for your two friendly and clever letters. Pray write me again. I shall be home in May or June, and not improbably shall come to Paris in the summer. Then we can talk; or in the interval I may be able to write, which is to-day out of the question. Pray take a word from a man of crushing occupations, and count it as a volume. Your little *conte* is delightful. Ah yes,

you are right, I love the eighteenth century; and so do you, and have not listened to its voice in vain.—The Hunted One,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## To Charles Baxter

*Honolulu, 8th March* 1889

MY DEAR CHARLES,—At last I have the accounts: the Doer has done excellently, and in the words of ——, 'I reciprocate every step of your behaviour.' . . . I send a letter for Bob in your care, as I don't know his Liverpool address,[1] by which (for he is to show you part of it) you will see we have got out of this adventure—or hope to have—with wonderful fortune. I have the retrospective horrors on me when I think of the liabilities I incurred; but, thank God, I think I'm in port again, and I have found one climate in which I can enjoy life. Even Honolulu is too cold for me; but the south isles were a heaven upon earth to a puir, catarrhal party like John'sone. We think, as Tahiti is too complete a banishment, to try Madeira. It's only a week from England, good communications, and I suspect in climate and scenery not unlike our dear islands; in people, alas! there can be no comparison. But friends could go, and I could come in summer, so I should not be quite cut off.

Lloyd and I have finished a story, *The Wrong Box.*

[1] R. A. M. Stevenson was at this time professor of Fine Art in the University of Liverpool.

If it is not funny, I am sure I do not know what is. I have split over writing it. Since I have been here, I have been toiling like a galley slave: three numbers of *The Master* to rewrite, five chapters of *The Wrong Box* to write and rewrite, and about five hundred lines of a narrative poem to write, rewrite, and re-rewrite. Now I have *The Master* waiting me for its continuation, two numbers more; when that's done, I shall breathe. This spasm of activity has been chequered with champagne parties: Happy and Glorious, Hawaii Ponoi paua: kou moi—(Native Hawaiians, dote upon your monarch!) Hawaiian God save the King. (In addition to my other labours, I am learning the language with a native moonshee.) Kalakaua is a terrible companion; a bottle of fizz is like a glass of sherry to him; he thinks nothing of five or six in an afternoon as a whet for dinner. You should see a photograph of our party after an afternoon with H. H. M.: my! what a crew!—Yours ever affectionately,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

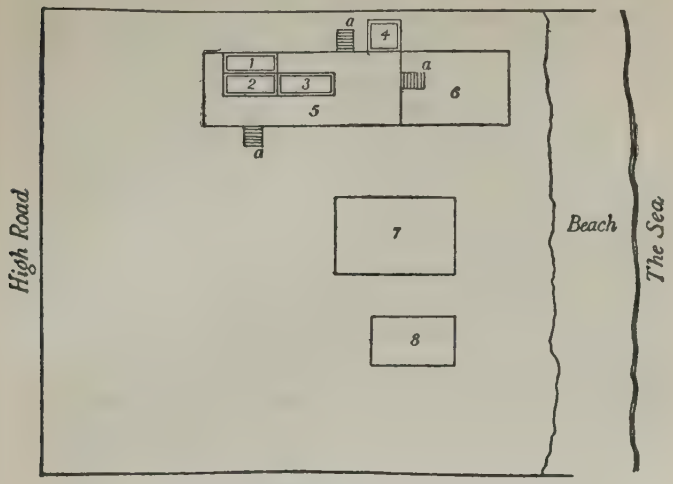
## To Sidney Colvin

Ill-health and pressing preoccupations, together with uncertainty as to when and where letters would reach him, had kept me from writing during the previous autumn and winter.

*Honolulu, March* 1889

MY DEAR COLVIN,—Still not a word from you! I am utterly cast down; but I will try to return good for evil and for once give you news. We are here

in the suburb of Honolulu in a rambling house or set of houses in a great garden.




*a a a*, stairs up to balcony.

1. Lloyd's room. 2. My mother's room. 3. A room kept dark for photographs. 4. The kitchen. 5. Balcony. 6. The *Lanai*, an open room or summer parlour, partly surrounded with Venetian shutters, in part quite open, which is the living-room. 7. A crazy dirty cottage used for the arts. 8. Another crazy dirty cottage, where Fanny and I live. The town is some three miles away, but the house is connected by telephone with the chief shops, and the tramway runs to within a quarter of a mile of us. I find Honolulu a beastly climate after Tahiti and have been in bed a little; but my colds *took on*

*no catarrhal symptom,* which is staggeringly delightful. I am studying Hawaiian with a native, a Mr. Joseph Poepoe, a clever fellow too: the tongue is a little bewildering; I am reading a pretty story in native—no, really it is pretty, although wandering and wordy; highly pretty with its continual traffic from one isle to another of the soothsayer, pursuing rainbows. Fanny is, I think, a good deal better on the whole, having profited like me by the tropics; my mother and Lloyd are first-rate. I do not think I have heard from you since last May; certainly not since June; and this really frightens me. Do write, even now. Scribner's Sons it should be; we shall probably be out of this some time in April, home some time in June. But the world whirls to me perceptibly, a mass of times and seasons and places and engagements, and seas to cross, and continents to traverse, so that I scarce know where I am. Well, I have had a brave time. *Et ego in Arcadia*—though I don't believe Arcadia was a spot upon Tahiti. I have written another long narrative poem: the *Song of Rahero.* Privately, I think it good: but your ominous silence over the *Feast of Famine* leads me to fear we shall not be agreed. Is it possible I have wounded you in some way? I scarce like to dream that it is possible; and yet I know too well it may be so. If so, don't write, and you can pitch into me when we meet. I am, admittedly, as mild as London Stout now; and the Old Man Virulent much a creature of the past. My dear Colvin, I owe you and Fleeming Jenkin, the two older men who took the trouble, and knew how to make a

friend of me, everything that I have or am: if I have behaved ill, just hold on and give me a chance, you shall have the slanging of me and I bet I shall prefer it to this silence.—Ever, my dear Colvin, your most affectionate

R. L. S.

## [MRS. R. L. STEVENSON TO MRS. SITWELL

This letter brought to friends in England the first news of the intended prolongation of the cruise among the remoter islands of the Pacific.

*Honolulu, towards the end of March* 1889

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Louis has improved so wonderfully in the delicious islands of the South Seas, that we think of trying yet one more voyage. We are a little uncertain as to how we shall go, whether in a missionary ship, or by hiring schooners from point to point, but the 'unregenerate' islands we must see. I suppose we shall be off some time in June, which will fetch us back to England in another year's time. You could hardly believe it if you could see Louis now. He looks as well as he ever did in his life, and has had no sign of cough or hemorrhage (begging pardon of Nemesis) for many months. It seems a pity to return to England until his health is firmly re-established, and also a pity not to see all that we can see quite easily starting from this place: and which will be our only opportunity in life. Of course there is the usual risk from hostile natives, and the horrible sea, but a positive risk is so much more wholesome than a negative one, and it is all such joy to Louis and Lloyd. As for me, I hate the sea, and am afraid of

it (though no one will believe that because in time of danger I do not make an outcry—nevertheless I *am* afraid of it, and it is not kind to me), but I love the tropic weather, and the wild people, and to see my two boys so happy. Mrs. Stevenson is going back to Scotland in May, as she does not like to be longer away from her old sister, who has been very ill. And besides, we do not feel justified in taking her to the sort of places we intend to visit. As for me, I can get comfort out of very rough surroundings for my people, I can work hard and enjoy it; I can even shoot pretty well, and though I 'don't want to fight, by jingo if I must,' why I can. I don't suppose there will be any occasion for that sort of thing —only in case.

I am not quite sure of the names, but I *think* our new cruise includes the Gilberts, the Fijis, and the Solomons. A letter might go from the Fijis; Louis will write the particulars, of which I am not sure. As for myself, I have had more cares than I was really fit for. To keep house on a yacht is no easy thing. When Louis and I broke loose from the ship and lived alone amongst the natives I got on very well. It was when I was deathly sea-sick, and the question was put to me by the cook, 'what shall we have for the cabin dinner, what for to-morrow's breakfast, what for lunch? and what about the sailors' food? Please come and look at the biscuits, for the weevils have got into them, and show me how to make yeast that will rise of itself, and smell the pork which seems pretty high, and give me directions about making a pudding with molasses

—and what is to be done about the bugs?'—etc. etc. In the midst of heavy dangerous weather, when I was lying on the floor clutching a basin, down comes the mate with a cracked head, and I must needs cut off the hair matted with blood, wash and dress the wound, and administer restoratives. I do not like being 'the lady of the yacht,' but ashore! O, then I felt I was repaid for all. I wonder did any of my letters from beautiful Tautira ever come to hand, with the descriptions of our life with Louis's adopted brother Ori a Ori? Ori wrote to us, if no one else did, and I mean to give you a translation of his letter. It begins with our native names.

*Tautira, 26 Dec. 1888*

To Teriitera (Louis) and Tapina Tutu (myself) and Aromaiterai (Lloyd) and Teiriha (Mrs. Stevenson) Salutation in the true Jesus.

I make you to know my great affection. At the hour when you left us, I was filled with tears; my wife, Rui Tehini, also, and all of my household. When you embarked I felt a great sorrow. It is for this that I went upon the road, and you looked from that ship, and I looked at you on the ship with great grief until you had raised the anchor and hoisted the sails. When the ship started, I ran along the beach to see you still; and when you were on the open sea I cried out to you, 'farewell Louis': and when I was coming back to my house I seemed to hear your voice crying 'Rui farewell.' Afterwards I watched the ship as long as I could until the night fell; and when it was dark I said to myself, 'if I had wings I should fly to the ship to meet you, and to

sleep amongst you, so that I might be able to come back to shore and to tell Rui Tehini, "I have slept upon the ship of Teriitera." ' After that we passed that night in the impatience of grief. Towards eight o'clock I seemed to hear your voice, 'Teriitera—Rui—here is the hour for putter and tiro' (cheese and syrup). I did not sleep that night, thinking continually of you, my very dear friend, until the morning: being then awake I went to see Tapina Tutu on her bed, and alas, she was not there. Afterwards I looked into your rooms; they did not please me as they used to do. I did not hear your voice crying, 'hail Rui.' I thought then that you had gone, and that you had left me. Rising up I went to the beach to see your ship, and I could not see it. I wept, then, till the night, telling myself continually, 'Teriitera returns into his own country and leaves his dear Rui in grief, so that I suffer for him, and weep for him.' I will not forget you in my memory. Here is the thought: I desire to meet you again. It is my dear Teriitera makes the only riches I desire in this world. It is your eyes that I desire to see again. It must be that your body and my body shall eat together at our table: there is what would make my heart content. But now we are separated. May God be with you all. May His word and His mercy go with you, so that you may be well and we also, according to the words of Paul.

ORI A ORI; that is to say, RUI.

After reading this to me Louis has left in tears saying that he is not worthy that such a letter should be written to him. We hope to so manage that we

shall stop at Tahiti and see Rui once more. I tell myself that pleasant story when I wake in the night.

I find my head swimming so that I cannot write any more. I wish some rich Catholic would send a parlour organ to Père Bruno of Tautira. I am going to try and save money to do it myself, but he may die before I have enough. I feel ashamed to be sitting here when I think of that old man who cannot draw because of scrivener's paralysis, who has no one year in and year out to speak to but natives (our Rui is a Protestant not bigoted like the rest of them—but still a Protestant) and the only pastime he has is playing on an old broken parlour organ whose keys are mostly dumb. I know no more pathetic figure. Have you no rich Catholic friends who would send him an organ that he could play upon? Of course I am talking nonsense, and yet I know somewhere that person exists if only I knew the place.

Our dearest love to you all.

FANNY]

## To Henry James

*Honolulu* [*March* 1889]

MY DEAR JAMES,—Yes—I own up—I am untrue to friendship and (what is less, but still considerable) to civilisation. I am not coming home for another year. There it is, cold and bald, and now you won't believe in me at all, and serve me right (says you) and the devil take me. But look here, and judge me tenderly. I have had more fun and pleasure of my life these past months than ever before, and more

health than any time in ten long years. And even here in Honolulu I have withered in the cold; and this precious deep is filled with islands, which we may still visit; and though the sea is a deathful place, I like to be there, and like squalls (when they are over); and to draw near to a new island, I cannot say how much I like. In short, I take another year of this sort of life, and mean to try to work down among the poisoned arrows, and mean (if it may be) to come back again when the thing is through, and converse with Henry James as heretofore; and in the meanwhile issue directions to H. J. to write to me once more. Let him address here at Honolulu, for my views are vague; and if it is sent here it will follow and find me, if I am to be found; and if I am not to be found, the man James will have done his duty, and we shall be at the bottom of the sea, where no post-office clerk can be expected to discover us, or languishing on a coral island, the philosophic drudges of some barbarian potentate: perchance, of an American Missionary. My wife has just sent to Mrs. Sitwell a translation (*tant bien que mal*) of a letter I have had from my chief friend in this part of the world: go and see her, and get a hearing of it; it will do you good; it is a better method of correspondence than even Henry James's. I jest, but seriously it is a strange thing for a tough, sick, middle-aged scrivener like R. L. S. to receive a letter so conceived from a man fifty years old, a leading politician, a crack orator, and the great wit of his village: boldly say, 'the highly popular M. P. of Tautira.' My nineteenth century strikes here,

and lies alongside of something beautiful and ancient. I think the receipt of such a letter might humble, shall I say even——? and for me, I would rather have received it than written *Redgauntlet* or the sixth *Æneid*. All told, if my books have enabled or helped me to make this voyage, to know Rui, and to have received such a letter, they have (in the old prefatorial expression) not been writ in vain. It would seem from this that I have been not so much humbled as puffed up; but, I assure you, I have in fact been both. A little of what that letter says is my own earning; not all, but yet a little; and the little makes me proud, and all the rest ashamed; and in the contrast, how much more beautiful altogether is the ancient man than him of to-day!

Well, well, Henry James is pretty good, though he *is* of the nineteenth century, and that glaringly. And to curry favour with him, I wish I could be more explicit; but, indeed, I am still of necessity extremely vague, and cannot tell what I am to do, nor where I am to go for some while yet. As soon as I am sure, you shall hear. All are fairly well—the wife, your countrywoman, least of all; troubles are not entirely wanting; but on the whole we prosper, and we are all affectionately yours,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## To SIDNEY COLVIN

*Honolulu, April 2nd,* 1889

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I am beginning to be ashamed of writing on to you without the least acknowledg-

ment, like a tramp; but I do not care—I am hardened; and whatever be the cause of your silence, I mean to write till all is blue. I am outright ashamed of my news, which is that we are not coming home for another year. I cannot but hope it may continue the vast improvement of my health: I think it good for Fanny and Lloyd; and we have all a taste for this wandering and dangerous life. My mother I send home, to my relief, as this part of our cruise will be (if we can carry it out) rather difficult in places. Here is the idea: about the middle of June (unless the Boston Board objects) we sail from Honolulu in the missionary ship (barquentine auxiliary steamer) *Morning Star*: she takes us through the Gilberts and Marshalls, and drops us (this is my great idea) on Ponape, one of the volcanic islands of the Carolines. Here we stay marooned among a doubtful population, with a Spanish vice-governor and five native kings, and a sprinkling of missionaries all at loggerheads, on the chance of fetching a passage to Sydney in a trader, a labour ship or (maybe, but this appears too bright) a ship of war. If we can't get the *Morning Star* (and the Board has many reasons that I can see for refusing its permission) I mean to try to fetch Fiji, hire a schooner there, do the Fijis and Friendlies, hit the course of the *Richmond* at Tonga Tabu, make back by Tahiti, and so to S. F., and home: perhaps in June 1890. For the latter part of the cruise will likely be the same in either case. You can see for yourself how much variety and adventure this promises, and that it is not devoid of danger at the best; but if we can pull

it off in safety, gives me a fine book of travel, and Lloyd a fine lecture and diorama, which should vastly better our finances.

I feel as if I were untrue to friendship; believe me, Colvin, when I look forward to this absence of another year, my conscience sinks at thought of the Monument: but I think you will pardon me if you consider how much this tropical weather mends my health. Remember me as I was at home, and think of me sea-bathing and walking about, as jolly as a sandboy: you will own the temptation is strong; and as the scheme, bar fatal accidents, is bound to pay into the bargain, sooner or later, it seems it would be madness to come home now, with an imperfect book, no illustrations to speak of, no diorama, and perhaps fall sick again by autumn. I do not think I delude myself when I say the tendency to catarrh has visibly diminished.

It is a singular thing that as I was packing up old papers ere I left Skerryvore, I came on the prophecies of a drunken Highland sibyl, when I was seventeen. She said I was to be very happy, to visit America, and *to be much upon the sea.* It seems as if it were coming true with a vengeance. Also, do you remember my strong, old, rooted belief that I shall die by drowning? I don't want that to come true, though it is an easy death; but it occurs to me oddly, with these long chances in front. I cannot say why I like the sea; no man is more cynically and constantly alive to its perils; I regard it as the highest form of gambling; and yet I love the sea as much as I hate gambling. Fine, clean emotions;

a world all and always beautiful; air better than wine; interest unflagging; there is upon the whole no better life.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

## To E. L. Burlingame

[*Honolulu, April* 1889]

MY DEAR BURLINGAME,—This is to announce the most prodigious change of programme. I have seen so much of the South Seas that I desire to see more, and I get so much health here that I dread a return to our vile climates. I have applied accordingly to the missionary folk to let me go round in the *Morning Star*; and if the Boston Board should refuse, I shall get somehow to Fiji, hire a trading schooner, and see the Fijis and Friendlies and Samoa. He would be a South Seayer, Mr. Burlingame. Of course, if I go in the *Morning Star*, I see all the eastern (or western?) islands.

Before I sail, I shall make out to let you have the last of *The Master*: though I tell you it sticks!—and I hope to have had some proofs forbye, of the verses anyway. And now to business.

I want (if you can find them) in the British sixpenny edition, if not, in some equally compact and portable shape—Seaside Library, for instance—the Waverley Novels entire, or as entire as you can get 'em, and the following of Marryat: *Phantom Ship*, *Peter Simple*, *Percival Keene*, *Privateersman*, *Children of the New Forest*, *Frank Mildmay*, *Newton Forster*, *Dog Fiend* (*Snarleyyow*). Also *Midshipman Easy*, *Kingsburn*, Carlyle's *French Revolu-*

*tion*, Motley's *Dutch Republic*, Lang's *Letters on Literature*, a complete set of my works, *Jenkin*, in duplicate; also *Familiar Studies*, ditto.

I have to thank you for the accounts, which are satisfactory indeed, and for the cheque for $1000. Another account will have come and gone before I see you. I hope it will be equally roseate in colour. I am quite worked out, and this cursed end of *The Master* hangs over me like the arm of the gallows; but it is always darkest before dawn, and no doubt the clouds will soon rise; but it is a difficult thing to write, above all in Mackellarese; and I cannot yet see my way clear. If I pull this off, *The Master* will be a pretty good novel or I am the more deceived; and even if I don't pull it off, it'll still have some stuff in it.

We shall remain here until the middle of June anyway; but my mother leaves for Europe early in May. Hence our mail should continue to come here; but not hers. I will let you know my next address, which will probably be Sydney. If we get on the *Morning Star*, I propose at present to get marooned on Ponape, and take my chance of getting a passage to Australia. It will leave times and seasons mighty vague, and the cruise is risky; but I shall know something of the South Seas when it is done, or else the South Seas will contain all there is of me. It should give me a fine book of travels, anyway.

Low will probably come and ask some dollars of you. Pray let him have them, they are for outfit. O, another complete set of my books should go to

Captain A. H. Otis, care of Dr. Merritt, Yacht *Casco*, Oakland, Cal.—In haste,

R. L. S.

## To Miss Adelaide Boodle

*Honolulu, April 6th,* 1889

MY DEAR MISS BOODLE,—Nobody writes a better letter than my Gamekeeper: so gay, so pleasant, so engagingly particular, answering (by some delicate instinct) all the questions she suggests. It is a shame you should get such a poor return as I can make, from a mind essentially and originally incapable of the art epistolary. I would let the paper-cutter take my place; but I am sorry to say the little wooden seaman did after the manner of seamen, and deserted in the Societies. The place he seems to have stayed at—seems, for his absence was not observed till we were near the Equator—was Tautira, and, I assure you, he displayed good taste, Tautira being as 'nigh hand heaven' as a paper-cutter or anybody has a right to expect.

I think all our friends will be very angry with us, and I give the grounds of their probable displeasure bluntly—we are not coming home for another year. My mother returns next month. Fanny, Lloyd, and I push on again among the islands on a trading schooner, the *Equator*—first for the Gilbert group, which we shall have an opportunity to explore thoroughly; then, if occasion serve, to the Marshalls and Carolines; and if occasion (or money) fail, to Samoa, and back to Tahiti. I own we are deserters, but we have excuses. You cannot con-

ceive how these climates agree with the wretched house-plant of Skerryvore: he wonders to find himself sea-bathing, and cutting about the world loose, like a grown-up person. They agree with Fanny too, who does not suffer from her rheumatism, and with Lloyd also. And the interest of the islands is endless; and the sea, though I own it is a fearsome place, is very delightful. We had applied for places in the American missionary ship, the *Morning Star*, but this trading schooner is a far preferable idea, giving us more time and a thousandfold more liberty, so we determined to cut off the missionaries with a shilling.

The Sandwich Islands do not interest us very much; we live here, oppressed with civilisation, and look for good things in the future. But it would surprise you if you came out to-night from Honolulu (all shining with electric lights, and all in a bustle from the arrival of the mail, which is to carry you these lines) and crossed the long wooden causeway along the beach, and came out on the road through Kapiolani park, and seeing a gate in the palings, with a tub of gold-fish by the wayside, entered casually in. The buildings stand in three groups by the edge of the beach, where an angry little spitfire sea continually spirts and thrashes with impotent irascibility, the big seas breaking further out upon the reef. The first is a small house, with a very large summer parlour, or *lanai*, as they call it here, roofed, but practically open. There you will find the lamps burning and the family sitting about the table, dinner just done: my mother, my wife, Lloyd, Belle, my wife's daughter, Austin her child, and to-night (by

way of rarity) a guest. All about the walls our South Sea curiosities, war clubs, idols, pearl shells, stone axes, etc.; and the walls are only a small part of a lanai, the rest being glazed or latticed windows, or mere open space. You will see there no sign of the Squire, however; and being a person of a humane disposition, you will only glance in over the balcony railing at the merry-makers in the summer parlour, and proceed further afield after the Exile. You look round, there is beautiful green turf, many trees of an outlandish sort that drop thorns—look out if your feet are bare; but I beg your pardon, you have not been long enough in the South Seas—and many oleanders in full flower. The next group of buildings is ramshackle, and quite dark; you make out a coach-house door, and look in—only some cocoanuts; you try round to the left and come to the sea front, where Venus and the moon are making luminous tracks on the water, and a great swell rolls and shines on the outer reef; and here is another door —all these places open from the outside—and you go in, and find photography, tubs of water, negatives steeping, a tap, and a chair and an ink-bottle, where my wife is supposed to write; round a little further, a third door, entering which you find a picture upon the easel and a table sticky with paints; a fourth door admits you to a sort of court, where there is a hen sitting—I believe on a fallacious egg. No sign of the Squire in all this. But right opposite the studio door you have observed a third little house, from whose open door lamplight streams and makes hay of the strong moonlight shadows. You had

supposed it made no part of the grounds, for a fence runs round it lined with oleander; but as the Squire is nowhere else, is it not just possible he may be here? It is a grim little wooden shanty; cobwebs bedeck it; friendly mice inhabit its recesses; the mailed cockroach walks upon the wall; so also, I regret to say, the scorpion. Herein are two pallet beds, two mosquito curtains, strung to the pitch-boards of the roof, two tables laden with books and manuscripts, three chairs, and, in one of the beds, the Squire busy writing to yourself, as it chances, and just at this moment somewhat bitten by mosquitoes. He has just set fire to the insect powder, and will be all right in no time; but just now he contemplates large white blisters, and would like to scratch them, but knows better. The house is not bare; it has been inhabited by Kanakas, and—you know what children are!—the bare wood walls are pasted over with pages from the *Graphic*, *Harper's Weekly*, etc. The floor is matted, and I am bound to say the matting is filthy. There are two windows and two doors, one of which is condemned; on the panels of that last a sheet of paper is pinned up, and covered with writing. I cull a few plums:—

'A duck-hammock for each person.
A patent organ like the commandant's at Taio hae.
Cheap and bad cigars for presents.
Revolvers.
Permanganate of potass.
Liniment for the head and sulphur.
Fine tooth-comb.'

What do you think this is? Simply life in the South Seas foreshortened. These are a few of our desiderata for the next trip, which we jot down as they occur.

There, I have really done my best and tried to send something like a letter—one letter in return for all your dozens. Pray remember us all to yourself, Mrs. Boodle, and the rest of your house. I do hope your mother will be better when this comes. I shall write and give you a new address when I have made up my mind as to the most probable, and I do beg you will continue to write from time to time and give us airs from home. To-morrow—think of it—I must be off by a quarter to eight to drive in to the palace and breakfast with his Hawaiian Majesty at 8.30: I shall be dead indeed. Please give my news to Scott, I trust he is better; give him my warm regards. To you we all send all kinds of things, and I am the absentee Squire,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## To Charles Baxter

*Honolulu, April* 1889

MY DEAR CHARLES,—As usual, your letter is as good as a cordial, and I thank you for it, and all your care, kindness, and generous and thoughtful friendship, from my heart. I was truly glad to hear a word of Colvin, whose long silence has terrified me; and glad to hear that you condoned the notion of my staying longer in the South Seas, for

I have decided in that sense. The first idea was to go in the *Morning Star*, missionary ship; but now I have found a trading schooner, the *Equator*, which is to call for me here early in June and carry us through the Gilberts. What will happen then, the Lord knows. My mother does not accompany us: she leaves here for home early in May, and you will hear of us from her; but not, I imagine, anything more definite. We shall get dumped on Butaritari, and whether we manage to go on to the Marshalls and Carolines, or whether we fall back on Samoa, Heaven must decide; but I mean to fetch back into the course of the *Richmond*—(to think you don't know what the *Richmond* is!—*the* steamer of the Eastern South Seas, joining New Zealand, Tongatabu, the Samoas, Taheite, and Rarotonga, and carrying by last advices sheep in the saloon!)—into the course of the *Richmond* and make Tahiti again on the home track. Would I like to see the Scots Observer? Wouldn't I not? But whaur? I'm direckit at space. They have nae post offishes at the Gilberts, and as for the Car'lines! Ye see, Mr. Baxter, we're no just in the punkshewal *centre* o' civ'lisation. But pile them up for me, and when I've decided on an address, I'll let you ken, and ye'll can send them stavin' after me.—Ever your affectionate

R. L. S.

## To Charles Baxter

The reference in the first paragraph is to the publication in the press, which Mr. Baxter had permitted, of one of Stevenson's letters written during the earlier part of his voyage. R. L. S. had remonstrated, always greatly disliking the publication of private letters during the writer's lifetime; and now writes to soften the effect of his remonstrance.

*Honolulu*, 10*th May* 1889

MY DEAR CHARLES,—I am appalled to gather from your last just to hand that you have felt so much concern about the letter. Pray dismiss it from your mind. But I think you scarce appreciate how disagreeable it is to have your private affairs and private unguarded expressions getting into print. It would soon sicken any one of writing letters. I have no doubt that letter was very wisely selected, but it just shows how things crop up. There was a raging jealousy between the two yachts; our captain was nearly in a fight over it. However, no more; and whatever you think, my dear fellow, do not suppose me angry with you or——; although I was *annoyed at the circumstance*—a very different thing. But it is difficult to conduct life by letter, and I continually feel I may be drifting into some matter of offence, in which my heart takes no part.

I must now turn to a point of business. This new cruise of ours is somewhat venturesome; and I think it needful to warn you not to be in a hurry to suppose us dead. In these ill-charted seas, it is quite on the cards we might be cast on some unvisited, or very rarely visited, island; that there we might lie for a long time, even years, unheard of;

and yet turn up smiling at the hinder end. So do not let me be 'rowpit' till you get some certainty we have gone to Davie Jones in a squall, or graced the feast of some barbarian in the character of Long Pig.

I have just been a week away alone on the lee coast of Hawaii, the only white creature in many miles, riding five and a half hours one day, living with a native, seeing four lepers shipped off to Molokai, hearing native causes, and giving my opinion as *amicus curiæ* as to the interpretation of a statute in English; a lovely week among God's best—at least God's sweetest works—Polynesians. It has bettered me greatly. If I could only stay there the time that remains, I could get my work done and be happy; but the care of my family keeps me in vile Honolulu, where I am always out of sorts, amidst heat and cold and cesspools and beastly *haoles*.[1] What is a haole? You are one; and so, I am sorry to say, am I. After so long a dose of whites, it was a blessing to get among Polynesians again even for a week.

Well, Charles, there are waur haoles than yoursel', I'll say that for ye; and trust before I sail I shall get another letter with more about yourself.—Ever your affectionate friend,

R. L. S.

[1] The Hawaiian name for white men.

## To W. H. Low

The allusions in the latter half of this letter are to the departure for Europe of the young Hawaiian princess Kaiulani (see the poem beginning 'When from her land to mine she goes,' in *Songs of Travel*), and to the circumstances of the great hurricane at Apia on March 15th, 1889.

*Honolulu, (about) 20th May* '89

MY DEAR LOW,— . . . The goods have come; many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.—I have at length finished *The Master*; it has been a sore cross to me; but now he is buried, his body's under hatches,—his soul, if there is any hell to go to, gone to hell; and I forgive him: it is harder to forgive Burlingame for having induced me to begin the publication, or myself for suffering the induction.—Yes, I think Hole has done finely; it will be one of the most adequately illustrated books of our generation; he gets the note, he tells the story—*my* story: I know only one failure—the Master standing on the beach.—You must have a letter for me at Sydney—till further notice. Remember me to Mrs. Will. H., the godlike sculptor, and any of the faithful. If you want to cease to be a republican, see my little Kaiulani, as she goes through—but she is gone already. You will die a red: I wear the colours of that little royal maiden, *Nous allons chanter à la ronde, si vous voulez!* only she is not blonde by several chalks, though she is but a half-blood, and the wrong half Edinburgh Scots like mysel'. But, O Low, I love the Polynesian: this civilisation of ours is a dingy, ungentlemanly business; it drops out too much of man, and too

much of that the very beauty of the poor beast; who has his beauties in spite of Zola and Co. As usual, here is a whole letter with no news: I am a bloodless, inhuman dog; and no doubt Zola is a better correspondent.—Long live your fine old English admiral—yours, I mean—the U.S.A. one at Samoa; I wept tears and loved myself and mankind when I read of him: he is not too much civilised. And there was Gordon, too; and there are others, beyond question. But if you could live, the only white folk, in a Polynesian village; and drink that warm, light *vin du pays* of human affection and enjoy that simple dignity of all about you—I will not gush, for I am now in my fortieth year, which seems highly unjust, but there it is, Mr. Low, and the Lord enlighten your affectionate

R. L. S.

## [MRS. R. L. STEVENSON TO SIDNEY COLVIN

This letter shows the writer in her character of wise and anxious critic of her husband's work. The result, in the judgment of most of his friends, went far to justify her misgivings.

*Honolulu, May 21st,* 1889

BEST OF FRIENDS,—It was a joy inexpressible to get a word from you at last. Fortunately for our peace of mind, we were almost positive that your letters had been sent to the places we had already left. Still it was a bitter disappointment to get nothing from you when we arrived here. I wish you could have seen us both throwing over the immense package of letters searching for your hand-

writing. Now that we know you have been ill, please do let some one send us a line to our next address telling us how you are. What that next address may be we do not yet know, as our final movements are a little uncertain. To begin with, a trading schooner, the *Equator*, will come along some time in the first part of June, lie outside the harbour here and signal to us. Within forty-eight hours we shall pack up our possessions, our barrel of sauer kraut, our barrel of salt onions, our bag of cocoanuts, our native garments, our tobacco, fish hooks, red combs, and Turkey red calicoes (all the latter for trading purposes), our hand organ, photograph and painting materials, and finally our magic lantern—all these upon a large whaleboat, and go out to the *Equator*. Lloyd, also, takes a fiddle, a guitar, a native instrument something like a banjo, called a taropatch fiddle, and a lot of song books. We shall be carried first to one of the Gilberts, landing at Butaritari. The *Equator* is going about amongst the Gilbert group, and we have the right to keep her over when we like within reasonable limits. Finally she will leave us, and we shall have to take the chances of what happens next. We hope to see the Marshalls, the Carolines, the Fijis, Tonga and Samoa (also other islands that I do not remember), perhaps staying a little while in Sydney, and stopping on our way home to see our friends in Tahiti and the Marquesas. I am very much exercised by one thing. Louis has the most enchanting material that any one ever had in the whole world for his book, and I am afraid he is going to spoil it all. He has taken

into his Scotch Stevenson head, that a stern duty lies before him, and that his book must be a sort of scientific and historical impersonal thing, comparing the different languages (of which he knows nothing, really) and the different peoples, the object being to settle the question as to whether they are of common Malay origin or not. Also to compare the Protestant and Catholic missions, etc., and the whole thing to be impersonal, leaving out all he knows of the people themselves. And I believe there is no one living who has got so near to them, or who understands them as he does. Think of a small treatise on the Polynesian races being offered to people who are dying to hear about Ori a Ori, the making of brothers with cannibals, the strange stories they told, and the extraordinary adventures that befell us:—suppose Herman Melville had given us his theories as to the Polynesian language and the probable good or evil results of the missionary influence instead of *Omoo* and *Typee*, or Kinglake[1] instead of *Eothen*. Louis says it is a stern sense of duty that is at the bottom of it, which is more alarming than anything else. I am so sure that you will agree with me that I am going to ask you to throw the weight of your influence as heavily as possible in the scales with me. Please refer to the matter in the letters we shall receive at our first stopping place, otherwise Louis will spend a great deal of time in Sydney actually reading up other people's books on the Islands. What a thing it is to have a 'man of genius' to deal with. It is like managing an over-

[1] The writer has omitted something here.

bred horse. Why with my own feeble hand I could write a book that the whole world would jump at. Please keep any letters of mine that contain any incidents of our wanderings. They are very exact as to facts, and Louis may, in this conscientious state of mind (indeed I am afraid he has), put nothing in his diary but statistics. Even if I thought it a desirable thing to write what he proposes, I should still think it impossible unless after we had lived and studied here some twenty years or more.

Now I am done with my complaining, and shall turn to the pleasanter paths. Louis went to one of the other islands a couple of weeks ago, quite alone, got drenched with rain and surf, rode over mountain paths—five and a half hours one day—and came back none the worse for it. To-day he goes to Molokai, the leper island. He never has a sign of hemorrhage, the air cushion is a thing of the past, and altogether he is a new man. How he will do in the English climate again I do not know, but in these latitudes he is very nearly a well man, nothing seems to do him harm but overwork. That, of course, is sometimes difficult to prevent. Now, however, the *Master* is done, we have enough money to go upon and there is no need to work at all. I must stop. My dear love to you all.

FANNY V. DE G. STEVENSON]

## To Mrs. R. L. Stevenson

The following two letters were written during and immediately after Stevenson's trip to the noted leper settlement, the scene of Father Damien's labours, at Molokai.

*Kalawao, Molokai* [*May* 1889]

DEAR FANNY,—I had a lovely sail up. Captain Cameron and Mr. Gilfillan, both born in the States, yet the first still with a strong Highland, and the second still with a strong Lowland accent, were good company; the night was warm, the victuals plain but good. Mr. Gilfillan gave me his berth, and I slept well, though I heard the sisters sick in the next stateroom, poor souls. Heavy rolling woke me in the morning; I turned in all standing, so went right on the upper deck. The day was on the peep out of a low morning bank, and we were wallowing along under stupendous cliffs. As the lights brightened, we could see certain abutments and buttresses on their front where wood clustered and grass grew brightly. But the whole brow seemed quite impassable, and my heart sank at the sight. Two thousand feet of rock making 19° (the Captain guesses) seemed quite beyond my powers. However, I had come so far; and, to tell you the truth, I was so cowed with fear and disgust that I dared not go back on the adventure in the interests of my own self-respect. Presently we came up with the leper promontory: lowland, quite bare and bleak and harsh, a little town of wooden houses, two churches, a landing-stair, all unsightly, sour, northerly, lying athwart the sunrise, with the great wall of the pali

cutting the world out on the south. Our lepers were sent on the first boat, about a dozen, one poor child very horrid, one white man, leaving a large grown family behind him in Honolulu, and then into the second stepped the sisters and myself. I do not know how it would have been with me had the sisters not been there. My horror of the horrible is about my weakest point; but the moral loveliness at my elbow blotted all else out; and when I found that one of them was crying, poor soul, quietly under her veil, I cried a little myself; then I felt as right as a trivet, only a little crushed to be there so uselessly. I thought it was a sin and a shame she should feel unhappy; I turned round to her, and said something like this: 'Ladies, God Himself is here to give you welcome. I'm sure it is good for me to be beside you; I hope it will be blessed to me; I thank you for myself and the good you do me.' It seemed to cheer her up; but indeed I had scarce said it when we were at the landing-stairs, and there was a great crowd, hundreds of (God save us!) pantomime masks in poor human flesh, waiting to receive the sisters and the new patients.

Every hand was offered: I had gloves, but I had made up my mind on the boat's voyage *not* to give my hand; that seemed less offensive than the gloves. So the sisters and I went up among that crew, and presently I got aside (for I felt I had no business there) and set off on foot across the promontory, carrying my wrap and the camera. All horror was quite gone from me: to see these dread creatures smile and look happy was beautiful. On my way

through Kalaupapa I was exchanging cheerful *alohas* with the patients coming galloping over on their horses; I was stopping to gossip at house-doors; I was happy, only ashamed of myself that I was here for no good. One woman was pretty, and spoke good English, and was infinitely engaging and (in the old phrase) towardly; she thought I was the new white patient; and when she found I was only a visitor, a curious change came in her face and voice—the only sad thing, morally sad, I mean—that I met that morning. But for all that, they tell me none want to leave. Beyond Kalaupapa the houses became rare; dry stone dykes, grassy, stony land, one sick pandanus; a dreary country; from overhead in the little clinging wood shogs of the pali chirruping of birds fell; the low sun was right in my face; the trade blew pure and cool and delicious; I felt as right as ninepence, and stopped and chatted with the patients whom I still met on their horses, with not the least disgust. About half-way over, I met the suprintendent (a leper) with a horse for me, and O, wasn't I glad! But the horse was one of those curious, dogged, cranky brutes that always dully want to go somewhere else, and my traffic with him completed my crushing fatigue. I got to the guest-house, an empty house with several rooms, kitchen, bath, etc. There was no one there, and I let the horse go loose in the garden, lay down on the bed, and fell asleep.

Dr. Swift woke me and gave me breakfast, then I came back and slept again while he was at the dispensary, and he woke me for dinner; and I came

back and slept again, and he woke me about six for supper; and then in about an hour I felt tired again, and came up to my solitary guest-house, played the flageolet, and am now writing to you. As yet, you see, I have seen nothing of the settlement, and my crushing fatigue (though I believe that was moral and a measure of my cowardice) and the doctor's opinion make me think the pali hopeless. 'You don't look a strong man,' said the doctor; 'but are you sound?' I told him the truth; then he said it was out of the question, and if I were to get up at all, I must be carried up. But, as it seems, men as well as horses continually fall on this ascent: the doctor goes up with a change of clothes—it is plain that to be carried would in itself be very fatiguing to both mind and body; and I should then be at the beginning of thirteen miles of mountain road to be ridden against time. How should I come through? I hope you will think me right in my decision: I mean to stay, and shall not be back in Honolulu till Saturday, June first. You must all do the best you can to make ready.

Dr. Swift has a wife and an infant son, beginning to toddle and run, and they live here as composed as brick and mortar—at least the wife does, a Kentucky German, a fine enough creature, I believe, who was quite amazed at the sisters shedding tears! How strange is mankind! Gilfillan too, a good fellow I think, and far from a stupid, kept up his hard Lowland Scottish talk in the boat while the sister was covering her face; but I believe he knew, and did it (partly) in embarrassment, and part perhaps in mis-

taken kindness. And that was one reason, too, why I made my speech to them. Partly, too, I did it, because I was ashamed to do so, and remembered one of my golden rules, 'When you are ashamed to speak, speak up at once.' But, mind you, that rule is only golden with strangers; with your own folks, there are other considerations. This is a strange place to be in. A bell has been sounded at intervals while I wrote, now all is still but a musical humming of the sea, not unlike the sound of telegraph wires; the night is quite cool and pitch dark, with a small fine rain; one light over in the leper settlement, one cricket whistling in the garden, my lamp here by my bedside, and my pen cheeping between my inky fingers.

Next day, lovely morning, slept all night, 80° in the shade, strong, sweet Anaho trade-wind.

LOUIS

## To Sidney Colvin

*Honolulu, June* 1889

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I am just home after twelve days' journey to Molokai, seven of them at the leper settlement, where I can only say that the sight of so much courage, cheerfulness, and devotion strung me too high to mind the infinite pity and horror of the sights. I used to ride over from Kalawao to Kalaupapa (about three miles across the promontory, the cliff-wall, ivied with forest and yet inaccessible from steepness, on my left), go to the Sisters' home, which is a miracle of neatness, play a game of croquet with seven leper girls (90° in the shade), got a little old-

maid meal served me by the Sisters, and ride home again, tired enough, but not too tired. The girls have all dolls, and love dressing them. You who know so many ladies delicately clad, and they who know so many dressmakers, please make it known it would be an acceptable gift to send scraps for doll dressmaking to the Reverend Sister Maryanne, Bishop Home, Kalaupapa, Molokai, Hawaiian Islands.

I have seen sights that cannot be told, and heard stories that cannot be repeated: yet I never admired my poor race so much, nor (strange as it may seem) loved life more than in the settlement. A horror of moral beauty broods over the place: that's like bad Victor Hugo, but it is the only way I can express the sense that lived with me all these days. And this even though it was in great part Catholic, and my sympathies flew never with so much difficulty as towards Catholic virtues. The passbook kept with heaven stirs me to anger and laughter. One of the sisters calls the place 'the ticket office to heaven.' Well, what is the odds? They do their darg, and do it with kindness and efficiency incredible; and we must take folks' virtues as we find them, and love the better part. Of old Damien, whose weaknesses and worse perhaps I heard fully, I think only the more. It was a European peasant: dirty, bigoted, untruthful, unwise, tricky, but superb with generosity, residual candour and fundamental good-humour: convince him he had done wrong (it might take hours of insult) and he would undo what he had done and like his corrector better. A man, with

all the grime and paltriness of mankind, but a saint and hero all the more for that. The place as regards scenery is grand, gloomy, and bleak. Mighty mountain walls descending sheer along the whole face of the island into a sea unusually deep; the front of the mountain ivied and furred with clinging forest, one viridescent cliff: about half-way from east to west, the low, bare, stony promontory edged in between the cliff and the ocean; the two little towns (Kalawao and Kalaupapa) seated on either side of it, as bare almost as bathing machines upon a beach; and the population—gorgons and chimaeras dire. All this tear of the nerves I bore admirably; and the day after I got away, rode twenty miles along the opposite coast and up into the mountains: they call it twenty, I am doubtful of the figures: I should guess it nearer twelve; but let me take credit for what residents allege; and I was riding again the day after, so I need say no more about health. Honolulu does not agree with me at all: I am always out of sorts there, with slight headache, blood to the head, etc. I had a good deal of work to do and did it with miserable difficulty; and yet all the time I have been gaining strength, as you see, which is highly encouraging. By the time I am done with this cruise I shall have the material for a very singular book of travels: names of strange stories and characters, cannibals, pirates, ancient legends, old Polynesian poetry,—never was so generous a farrago. I am going down now to get the story of a shipwrecked family, who were fifteen months on an island with a murderer: there is a

specimen. The Pacific is a strange place; the nineteenth century only exists there in spots: all round, it is a no man's land of the ages, a stir-about of epochs and races, barbarisms and civilisations, virtues and crimes.

It is good of you to let me stay longer, but if I had known how ill you were, I should be now on my way home. I had chartered my schooner and made all arrangements before (at last) we got definite news. I feel highly guilty; I should be back to insult and worry you a little. Our address till further notice is to be c/o R. Towns & Co., Sydney. That is final: I only got the arrangement made yesterday; but you may now publish it abroad.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

## To James Payn

The following was written to his old friend of Cornhill Magazine days, Mr. James Payn, on receiving in Hawaii news of that gentleman's ill health and gathering deafness.

*Honolulu, H.I., June 13th,* 1889

MY DEAR JAMES PAYN,—I get sad news of you here at my offsetting for further voyages: I wish I could say what I feel. Sure there was never any man less deserved this calamity; for I have heard you speak time and again, and I remember nothing that was unkind, nothing that was untrue, nothing that was not helpful, from your lips. It is the ill-talkers that should hear no more. God knows, I know no word of consolation; but I do feel your trouble. You are the more open to letters now; let me talk to you for

two pages. I have nothing but happiness to tell; and you may bless God you are a man so sound-hearted that (even in the freshness of your calamity) I can come to you with my own good fortune unashamed and secure of sympathy. It is a good thing to be a good man, whether deaf or whether dumb; and of all our fellow-craftsmen (whom yet they count a jealous race), I never knew one but gave you the name of honesty and kindness: come to think of it gravely, this is better than the finest hearing. We are all on the march to deafness, blindness, and all conceivable and fatal disabilities; we shall not all get there with a report so good. My good news is a health astonishingly reinstated. This climate; these voyagings; these landfalls at dawn; new islands peaking from the morning bank; new forested harbours; new passing alarms of squalls and surf; new interests of gentle natives,—the whole tale of my life is better to me than any poem.

I am fresh just now from the leper settlement of Molokai, playing croquet with seven leper girls, sitting and yarning with old, blind, leper beachcombers in the hospital, sickened with the spectacle of abhorrent suffering and deformation amongst the patients, touched to the heart by the sight of lovely and effective virtues in their helpers: no stranger time have I ever had, nor any so moving. I do not think it a little thing to be deaf, God knows, and God defend me from the same!—but to be a leper, or one of the self-condemned, how much more awful! and yet there's a way there also. 'There are Molokais everywhere,' said Mr. Dutton, Father

Damien's dresser; you are but new landed in yours; and my dear and kind adviser, I wish you, with all my soul, that patience and courage which you will require. Think of me meanwhile on a trading schooner, bound for the Gilbert Islands, thereafter for the Marshalls, with a diet of fish and cocoanut before me; bound on a cruise of—well, of investigation to what islands we can reach, and to get (some day or other) to Sydney, where a letter addressed to the care of R. Towns & Co. will find me sooner or later; and if it contain any good news, whether of your welfare or the courage with which you bear the contrary, will do me good.—Yours affectionately (although so near a stranger),

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## To Lady Taylor

*Honolulu, June 19th*, 1889

MY DEAR LADY TAYLOR,—Our new home, the *Equator*, trading schooner, rides at the buoy to-night, and we are for sea shortly. All your folk of the Roost held us for phantoms and things of the night from our first appearance; but I do wish you would try to believe in our continued existence, as flesh and blood obscurely tossed in the Pacific, or walking coral shores, and in our affection, which is more constant than becomes the breasts of such absconders. My good health does not cease to be wonderful to myself: Fanny is better in these warm places; it

is the very thing for Lloyd; and in the matter of interest, the spice of life, etc., words cannot depict what fun we have. Try to have a little more patience with the fugitives, and think of us now and again among the Gilberts, where we ought to be about the time when you receive this scrap. They make no great figure on the atlas, I confess; but you will see the name there, if you look—which I wish you would, and try to conceive us as still extant. We all send the kindest remembrances to all of you; please make one of the girls write us the news to the care of R. Towns & Co., Sydney, New South Wales, where we hope to bring up about the end of the year—or later. Do not forget yours affectionately,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## TO SIDNEY COLVIN

Stevenson and his party sailed accordingly on the trading schooner *Equator*, 'on a certain bright June day in 1889,' for the Gilbert Islands, a scattered group of atolls in the Western Pacific. Their expectation was to come back into civilisation again by way of the Carolines, Manila, and the China ports; but instead of this, circumstances which occurred to change the trader's course took them southwards to Samoa, where they arrived in December of the same year. Their second voyage was thus of a six months' duration; in the course of it they spent two periods of about six weeks each on land, first at one and then at another of the two island capitals, Butaritari and Apemama. The following letter is the first which reached Stevenson's friends from this part of his voyage, and was written in two instalments, the first from on board the *Equator* in the lagoon of the island of Apaiang; the second, six weeks later, from the settlement on shore at Apemama, which the king, his friend Tembinoka, allowed him and his party to occupy during their stay. The account of this stay at Apemama and of the

character of the king is far most the interesting and attractive part of the volume called *In the South Seas*, which was the literary result of these voyages.

*Schooner* Equator, *Apaiang Lagoon, August 22nd*, 1889

MY DEAR COLVIN,—The missionary ship is outside the reef trying (vainly) to get in; so I may have a chance to get a line off. I am glad to say I shall be home by June next for the summer, or we shall know the reason why. For God's sake be well and jolly for the meeting. I shall be, I believe, a different character from what you have seen this long while. This cruise is up to now a huge success, being interesting, pleasant, and profitable. The beachcomber is perhaps the most interesting character here; the natives are very different, on the whole, from Polynesians: they are moral, stand-offish (for good reasons), and protected by a dark tongue. It is delightful to meet the few Hawaiians (mostly missionaries) that are dotted about, with their Italian *brio* and their ready friendliness. The whites are a strange lot, many of them good, kind, pleasant fellows; others quite the lowest I have ever seen in the slums of cities. I wish I had time to narrate to you the doings and character of three white murderers (more or less proven) I have met. One, the only undoubted assassin of the lot, quite gained my affection in his big home out of a wreck, with his New Hebrides wife in her savage turban of hair and yet a perfect lady, and his three adorable little girls in Rob Roy Macgregor dresses, dancing to the hand organ, performing circus on the floor with startling effects of nudity, and curling up together

on a mat to sleep, three sizes, three attitudes, three Rob Roy dresses, and six little clenched fists: the murderer meanwhile brooding and gloating over his chicks, till your whole heart went out to him; and yet his crime on the face of it was dark; disembowelling, in his own house, an old man of seventy, and him drunk.

It is lunch-time, I see, and I must close up with my warmest love to you. I wish you were here to sit upon me when required. Ah! if you were but a good sailor! I will never leave the sea, I think; it is only there that a Briton lives: my poor grandfather, it is from him I inherit the taste, I fancy, and he was round many islands in his day; but I, please God, shall beat him at that before the recall is sounded. Would you be surprised to learn that I contemplate becoming a shipowner? I do, but it is a secret. Life is far better fun than people dream who fall asleep among the chimney stacks and telegraph wires.

Love to Henry James and others near.—Ever yours, my dear fellow,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

*Equator Town, Apemama, October* 1889

No *Morning Star* came, however; and so now I try to send this to you by the schooner *J. L. Tiernan.* We have been about a month ashore, camping out in a kind of town the king set up for us: on the idea that I was really a 'big chief' in England. He dines with us sometimes, and sends up a cook for a share of our meals when he does not come himself.

This sounds like high living! alas, undeceive yourself. Salt junk is the mainstay; a low island, except for cocoanuts, is just the same as a ship at sea: brackish water, no supplies, and very little shelter. The king is a great character—a thorough tyrant, very much of a gentleman, a poet, a musician, a historian, or perhaps rather more a genealogist—it is strange to see him lying in his house among a lot of wives (nominal wives) writing the History of Apemama in an account-book; his description of one of his own songs, which he sang to me himself, as 'about sweethearts, and trees, and the sea—and no true, all-the-same lie,' seems about as compendious a definition of lyric poetry as a man could ask. Tembinoka is here the great attraction: all the rest is heat and tedium and villainous dazzle, and yet more villainous mosquitoes. We are like to be here, however, many a long week before we get away, and then whither? A strange trade this voyaging: so vague, so bound-down, so helpless. Fanny has been planting some vegetables, and we have actually onions and radishes coming up: ah, onion-despiser, were you but a while in a low island, how your heart would leap at sight of a coster's barrow! I think I could shed tears over a dish of turnips. No doubt we shall all be glad to say farewell to low islands—I had near said for ever. They are very tame; and I begin to read up the directory, and pine for an island with a profile, a running brook, or were it only a well among the rocks. The thought of a mango came to me early this morning and set my greed on edge; but you do not know what a mango is, so——.

I have been thinking a great deal of you and the Monument of late, and even tried to get my thoughts into a poem, hitherto without success. God knows how you are: I begin to weary dreadfully to see you—well, in nine months, I hope; but that seems a long time. I wonder what has befallen me too, that flimsy part of me that lives (or dwindles) in the public mind; and what has befallen *The Master*, and what kind of a Box the Merry Box has been found. It is odd to know nothing of all this. We had an old woman to do devil-work for you about a month ago, in a Chinaman's house on Apaiang (August 23rd or 24th). You should have seen the crone with a noble masculine face, like that of an old crone [*sic*], a body like a man's (naked all but the feathery female girdle), knotting cocoanut leaves and muttering spells: Fanny and I, and the good captain of the *Equator*, and the Chinaman and his native wife and sister-in-law, all squatting on the floor about the sibyl; and a crowd of dark faces watching from behind her shoulder (she sat right in the doorway) and tittering aloud with strange, appalled, embarrassed laughter at each fresh adjuration. She informed us you were in England, not travelling and now no longer sick; she promised us a fair wind the next day, and we had it, so I cherish the hope she was as right about Sidney Colvin. The shipownering has rather petered out since I last wrote, and a good many other plans beside.

Health? Fanny very so-so; I pretty right upon the whole, and getting through plenty work: I know

not quite how, but it seems to me not bad and in places funny.

South Sea Yarns:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. *The Wrecker* | by | R. L. S. and Lloyd O. |
| 2. *The Pearl Fisher* | | |
| 3. *The Beachcombers* | | |

*The Pearl Fisher*, part done, lies in Sydney. It is *The Wrecker* we are now engaged upon: strange ways of life, I think, they set forth: things that I can scarce touch upon, or even not at all, in my travel book; and the yarns are good, I do believe. *The Pearl Fisher* is for the New York Ledger: the yarn is a kind of Monte Cristo one. *The Wrecker* is the least good as a story, I think; but the characters seem to me good. *The Beachcombers* is more sentimental. These three scarce touch the outskirts of the life we have been viewing; a hot-bed of strange characters and incidents: Lord, how different from Europe or the Pallid States! Farewell. Heaven knows when this will get to you. I burn to be in Sydney and have news.

R. L. S.

## To Sidney Colvin

The following, written in the last days of the sail southwards from the Gilberts to Samoa, contains the full plan of the South Sea book as it had now been conceived. In the issue, Part I. (so far as I know) was never written; Parts II. and III. appeared serially in the New York Sun, and were reprinted with corrections in the volume called *In the South Seas*; Part IV. was never written; Part V. was written but has not been printed, at least in this country;

Part VI. (and far the most successful) closes the volume *In the South Seas*; Part VII. developed itself into *A Footnote to History*. The verses at the end of this letter have already been printed (*Songs of Travel*, p. 58); but I give them here with the context, as in similar instances above. The allusion is to the two colossal images from Easter Island which used to stand under the portico to the right hand of the visitor entering the Museum, were for some years removed, and are now restored to their old place.

*Schooner* Equator, *at sea.* 190 *miles off Samoa*
*Monday, December 2nd*, 1889

MY DEAR COLVIN,—We are just nearing the end of our long cruise. Rain, calms, squalls, bang—there's the foretopmast gone; rain, calm, squalls, away with the staysail; more rain, more calm, more squalls; a prodigious heavy sea all the time, and the *Equator* staggering and hovering like a swallow in a storm; and the cabin, a great square, crowded with wet human beings, and the rain avalanching on the deck, and the leaks dripping everywhere: Fanny in the midst of fifteen males, bearing up wonderfully. But such voyages are at the best a trial. We had one particularity: coming down on Winslow Reef, p. d. (position doubtful): two positions in the directory, a third (if you cared to count that) on the chart; heavy sea running, and the night due. The boats were cleared, bread put on board, and we made up our packets for a boat voyage of four or five hundred miles, and turned in, expectant of a crash. Needless to say it did not come, and no doubt we were far to leeward. If we only had twopenceworth of wind, we might be at dinner in Apia to-morrow evening; but no such luck: here we roll, dead before a light air—and that is no point of sailing at all for a fore and aft schooner—the sun bla-

zing overhead, thermometer 88°, four degrees above what I have learned to call South Sea temperature; but for all that, land so near, and so much grief being happily astern, we are all pretty gay on board, and have been photographing and draught-playing and sky-larking like anything. I am minded to stay not very long in Samoa and confine my studies there (as far as any one can forecast) to the history of the late war. My book is now practically modelled: if I can execute what is designed, there are few better books now extant on this globe, bar the epics, and the big tragedies, and histories, and the choice lyric poetics and a novel or so—none. But it is not executed yet; and let not him that putteth on his armour, vaunt himself. At least, nobody has had such stuff; such wild stories, such beautiful scenes, such singular intimacies, such manners and traditions, so incredible a mixture of the beautiful and horrible, the savage and civilised. I will give you here some idea of the table of contents, which ought to make your mouth water. I propose to call the book *The South Seas*: it is rather a large title, but not many people have seen more of them than I, perhaps no one—certainly no one capable of using the material.

*Part I. General. 'Of schooners, islands, and maroons'*

CHAPTER I. Marine.
" II. Contraband (smuggling, barratry, labour traffic).
" III. The Beachcomber.

CHAPTER IV. Beachcomber stories. i. The Murder of the Chinaman. ii. Death of a Beachcomber. iii. A Character. iv. The Apia Blacksmith.

*Part II. The Marquesas*

" V. Anaho. i. Arrival. ii. Death. iii. The Tapu. iv. Morals. v. Hoka.

" VI. Tai-o-hae. i. Arrival. ii. The French. iii. The Royal Family. iv. Chiefless Folk. v. The Catholics. vi. Hawaiian Missionaries.

" VII. Observations of a Long Pig. i. Cannibalism. ii. Hatiheu. iii. Frère Michel. iv. Taahauku and Atuona. v. The Vale of Atuona. vi. Moipu. vii. Captain Hati.

*Part III. The Dangerous Archipelago*

" VIII. The Group.

" IX. A House to let in a Low Island.

" X. A Paumotuan Funeral. i. The Funeral. ii. Tales of the Dead.

*Part IV. Tahiti*

" XI. Tautira.

" XII. Village Government in Tahiti.

" XIII. A Journey in Quest of Legends.

" XIV. Legends and Songs.

" XV. Life in Eden.

" XVI. Note on the French Regimen.

*Part V. The Eight Islands*

CHAPTER XVII. A note on Missions.
" XVIII. The Kona Coast of Hawaii. i. Hookena. ii. A Ride in the Forest. iii. A Law Case. iv. The City of Refuge. v. The Lepers.
" XIX. Molokai. i. A Week in the Precinct. ii. History of the Leper Settlement. iii. The Molokii. iv. The Free Island.

*Part VI. The Gilberts*

" XX. The Group. ii. Position of Woman. iii. The Missions. iv. Devilwork. v. Republics.
" XXI. Rule and Misrule on Makin. i. Butaritari, its King and Court. ii. History of Three Kings. iii. The Drink Question.
" XXII. A Butaritarian Festival.
" XXIII. The King of Apemama. i. First Impressions. ii. Equator Town and the Palace. iii. The Three Corselets.

*Part VII. Samoa*

which I have not yet reached

Even as so sketched it makes sixty chapters, not less than 300 Cornhill pages; and I suspect not much

under 500. Samoa has yet to be accounted for: I think it will be all history, and I shall work in observations on Samoan manners, under the similar heads in other Polynesian islands. It is still possible, though unlikely, that I may add a passing visit to Fiji or Tonga, or even both; but I am growing impatient to see yourself, and I do not want to be later than June of coming to England. Anyway, you see it will be a large work, and as it will be copiously illustrated, the Lord knows what it will cost. We shall return, God willing, by Sydney, Ceylon, Suez, and, I guess, Marseilles the many-masted (copyright epithet). I shall likely pause a day or two in Paris, but all that is too far ahead—although now it begins to look near—so near, and I can hear the rattle of the hansom up Endell Street, and see the gates swing back, and feel myself jump out upon the Monument steps—Hosanna!—home again. My dear fellow, now that my father is done with his troubles, and 17 Heriot Row no more than a mere shell, you and that gaunt old Monument in Bloomsbury are all that I have in view when I use the word home; some passing thoughts there may be of the rooms at Skerryvore, and the blackbirds in the chine on a May morning; but the essence is S. C. and the Museum. Suppose, by some damned accident, you were no more; well, I should return just the same, because of my mother and Lloyd, whom I now think to send to Cambridge; but all the spring would have gone out of me, and ninety per cent. of the attraction lost. I will copy for you here a copy of verses made in Apemama.

I heard the pulse of the besieging sea
Throb far away all night. I heard the wind
Fly crying, and convulse tumultuous palms.
I rose and strolled. The isle was all bright sand,
And flailing fans and shadows of the palm:
The heaven all moon, and wind, and the blind vault—
The keenest planet slain, for Venus slept.
The King, my neighbour, with his host of wives,
Slept in the precinct of the palisade:
Where single, in the wind, under the moon,
Among the slumbering cabins, blazed a fire,
Sole street-lamp and the only sentinel.
To other lands and nights my fancy turned,
To London first, and chiefly to your house,
The many-pillared and the well-beloved.
There yearning fancy lighted; there again
In the upper room I lay and heard far off
The unsleeping city murmur like a shell;
The muffled tramp of the Museum guard
Once more went by me; I beheld again
Lamps vainly brighten the dispeopled street;
Again I longed for the returning morn,
The awaking traffic, the bestirring birds,
The consentaneous trill of tiny song
That weaves round monumental cornices
A passing charm of beauty: most of all,
For your light foot I wearied, and your knock
That was the glad réveillé of my day.
Lo, now, when to your task in the great house
At morning through the portico you pass,
One moment glance where, by the pillared wall,
Far-voyaging island gods, begrimed with smoke,
Sit now unworshipped, the rude monument
Of faiths forgot and races undivined;
Sit now disconsolate, remembering well
The priest, the victim, and the songful crowd,
The blaze of the blue noon, and that huge voice
Incessant, of the breakers on the shore.
As far as these from their ancestral shrine,
So far, so foreign, your divided friends
Wander, estranged in body, not in mind.

R. L. S.

## To E. L. Burlingame

*Schooner* Equator, *at sea*,
*Wednesday, 4th December* 1889

MY DEAR BURLINGAME,—We are now about to rise, like whales, from this long dive, and I make ready a communication which is to go to you by the first mail from Samoa. How long we shall stay in that group I cannot forecast; but it will be best still to address at Sydney, where I trust, when I shall arrive, perhaps in one month from now, more probably in two or three, to find all news.

*Business.*—Will you be likely to have a space in the Magazine for a serial story, which should be ready, I believe, by April, at latest by autumn? It is called *The Wrecker*; and in book form will appear as number 1 of *South Sea Yarns* by R. L. S. and Lloyd Osbourne. Here is the table as far as fully conceived, and indeed executed.[1] . . .

The story is founded on fact, the mystery I really believe to be insoluble; the purchase of a wreck has never been handled before, no more has San Francisco. These seem all elements of success. There is, besides, a character, Jim Pinkerton, of the advertising American, on whom we build a good deal; and some sketches of the American merchant marine, opium smuggling in Honolulu, etc. It should run to (about) three hundred pages of my MS. I would like to know if this tale smiles upon you, if you will have a vacancy, and what you will be willing to pay. It will of course be copyright in both

[1] Table of chapter headings follows.

the States and England. I am a little anxious to have it tried serially, as it tests the interest of the mystery.

*Pleasure.*—We have had a fine time in the Gilbert group, though four months on low islands, which involves low diet, is a largeish order; and my wife is rather down. I am myself, up to now, a pillar of health, though our long and vile voyage of calms, squalls, cataracts of rain, sails carried away, foretopmasts lost, boats cleared and packets made on the approach of a p. d. reef, etc., has cured me of salt brine, and filled me with a longing for beef steak and mangoes not to be depicted. The interest has been immense. Old King Tembinoka of Apemama, the Napoleon of the group, poet, tyrant, altogether a man of mark, gave me the woven corselets of his grandfather, his father and his uncle, and, what pleased me more, told me their singular story, then all manner of strange tales, facts, and experiences for my South Sea book, which should be a Tearer, Mr. Burlingame: no one at least has had such stuff.

We are now engaged in the hell of a dead calm, the heat is cruel—it is the only time when I suffer from heat: I have nothing on but a pair of serge trousers, and a singlet without sleeves of Oxford gauze—O, yes, and a red sash about my waist; and yet as I sit here in the cabin, sweat streams from me. The rest are on deck under a bit of awning; we are not much above a hundred miles from port, and we might as well be in Kamschatka. However, I should be honest; this is the first calm I have endured without the added bane of a heavy swell, and the intoxicated

blue-bottle wallowings and knockings of the helpless ship.

I wonder how you liked the end of *The Master*; that was the hardest job I ever had to do; did I do it?

My wife begs to be remembered to yourself and Mrs. Burlingame. Remember all of us to all friends, particularly Low, in case I don't get a word through for him.—I am, yours very sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## To Charles Baxter

The following was written soon after the termination of the voyage of the *Equator* and Stevenson's first landing in Samoa, where he was engaged in collecting materials for the account (then intended to be the concluding part of his great projected South Sea book) of the war and hurricane of the previous year.

*Samoa* [*December* 1889]

MY DEAR BAXTER,—. . . I cannot return until I have seen either Tonga or Fiji or both: and I must not leave here till I have finished my collections on the war—a very interesting bit of history, the truth often very hard to come at, and the search (for me) much complicated by the German tongue, from the use of which I have desisted (I suppose) these fifteen years. The last two days I have been mugging with a dictionary from five to six hours a day; besides this, I have to call upon, keep sweet, and judiciously interview all sorts of persons—English, American, German, and Samoan. It makes a hard life; above all, as after every interview I have to come and get

my notes straight on the nail. I believe I should have got my facts before the end of January, when I shall make for Tonga or Fiji. I am down right in in the hurricane season; but they had so bad a one last year, I don't imagine there will be much of an edition this. Say that I get to Sydney some time in April, and I shall have done well, and be in a position to write a very singular and interesting book, or rather two; for I shall begin, I think, with a separate opuscule on the Samoan Trouble, about as long as *Kidnapped*, not very interesting, but valuable—and a thing proper to be done. And then, hey! for the big South Sea Book: a devil of a big one, and full of the finest sport.

This morning as I was going along to my breakfast a little before seven, reading a number of Blackwood's Magazine, I was startled by a soft *talofa*, *alii* (note for my mother: they are quite courteous here in the European style, quite unlike Tahiti), right in my ear: it was Mataafa coming from early mass in his white coat and white linen kilt, with three fellows behind him. Mataafa is the nearest thing to a hero in my history, and really a fine fellow; plenty sense, and the most dignified, quiet, gentle manners. Talking of Blackwood—a file of which I was lucky enough to find here in the lawyer's—Mrs. Oliphant seems in a staggering state: from the *Wrong Box* to *The Master* I scarce recognise either my critic or myself. I gather that *The Master* should do well, and at least that notice is agreeable reading. I expect to be home in June: you will have gathered that I am pretty well. In addition to my labours, I

suppose I walk five or six miles a day, and almost every day I ride up and see Fanny and Lloyd, who are in a house in the bush with Ah Fu. I live in Apia for history's sake with Moors, an American trader. Day before yesterday I was arrested and fined for riding fast in the street, which made my blood bitter, as the wife of the manager of the German Firm has twice almost ridden me down, and there seems none to say her nay. The Germans have behaved pretty badly here, but not in all ways so ill as you may have gathered: they were doubtless much provoked; and if the insane Knappe had not appeared upon the scene, might have got out of the muddle with dignity. I write along without rhyme or reason, as things occur to me.

I hope from my outcries about printing you do not think I want you to keep my news or letters in a Blue Beard closet. I like all friends to hear of me; they all should if I had ninety hours in the day, and strength for all of them; but you must have gathered how hard worked I am, and you will understand I go to bed a pretty tired man.

*29th December* [1889]

To-morrow (Monday, I won't swear to my day of the month; this is the Sunday between Christmas and New Year) I go up the coast with Mr. Clarke, one of the London Society missionaries, in a boat to examine schools, see Tamasese, etc. Lloyd comes to photograph. Pray Heaven we have good weather; this is the rainy season; we shall be gone four or five days; and if the rain keep off, I shall be glad

of the change; if it rain, it will be beastly. This explains still further how hard pressed I am, as the mail will be gone ere I return, and I have thus lost the days I meant to write in. I have a boy, Henry, who interprets and copies for me, and is a great nuisance. He said he wished to come to me in order to learn 'long explessions.' Henry goes up along with us; and as I am not fond of him, he may before the trip is over hear some 'stlong explessions.' I am writing this on the back balcony at Moors', palms and a hill like the hill of Kinnoull looking in at me; myself lying on the floor, and (like the parties in Handel's song) 'clad in robes of virgin white'; the ink is dreadful, the heat delicious, a fine going breeze in the palms, and from the other side of the house the sudden angry splash and roar of the Pacific on the reef, where the warships are still piled from last year's hurricane, some under water, one high and dry upon her side, the strangest figure of a ship was ever witnessed; the narrow bay there is full of ships; the men-of-war covered with sail after the rains, and (especially the German ship, which is fearfully and awfully top heavy) rolling almost yards in, in what appears to be calm water.

Samoa, Apia at least, is far less beautiful than the Marquesas or Tahiti: a more gentle scene, gentler acclivities, a tamer face of nature; and this much aided, for the wanderer, by the great German plantations with their countless regular avenues of palms. The island has beautiful rivers, of about the bigness of our waters in the Lothians, with pleasant pools and waterfalls and overhanging verdure, and

often a great volume of sound, so that once I thought I was passing near a mill, and it was only the voice of the river. I am not specially attracted by the people; but they are courteous; the women very attractive, and dress lovely; the men purposelike, well set up, tall, lean, and dignified. As I write, the breeze is brisking up, doors are beginning to slam and shutters; a strong draught sweeps round the balcony; it looks doubtful for to-morrow. Here I shut up.—Ever your affectionate

R. L. STEVENSON

## To Lady Taylor

This letter contains the first announcement of the purchase of the Vailima estate (not yet so named). Sir Percy Shelley had died in the previous December.

*Apia, Samoa, Jan. 20th*, 1890

MY DEAR LADY TAYLOR,—I shall hope to see you in some months from now, when I come home—to break up my establishment—I know no diminutive of the word. Your daughters cast a spell upon me; they were always declaring I was a winged creature and would vanish into the uttermost isle; and they were right, and I have made my preparations. I am now the owner of an estate upon Upolu, some two or three miles behind and above Apia; three streams, two waterfalls, a great cliff, an ancient native fort, a view of the sea and lowlands, or (to be more precise) several views of them in various directions, are now mine. It would be affectation to omit a good many head of cattle; above all as it required much diplomacy to have them thrown in, for the gentle-

man who sold to me was staunch. Besides all this, there is a great deal more forest than I have any need for; or to be plain the whole estate is one impassable jungle, which must be cut down and through at considerable expense. Then the house has to be built; and then (as a climax) we may have to stand a siege in it in the next native war.

I do feel as if I was a coward and a traitor to desert my friends; only, my dear lady, you know what a miserable corrhyzal (is that how it is spelt?) creature I was at home: and here I have some real health, I can walk, I can ride, I can stand some exposure, I am up with the sun, I have a real enjoyment of the world and of myself; it would be hard to go back again to England and to bed; and I think it would be very silly. I am sure it would; and yet I feel shame, and I know I am not writing like myself. I wish you knew how much I admired you, and when I think of those I must leave, how early a place your name occupies. I have not had the pleasure to know you very long; and yet I feel as if my leaving England were a speical treachery to you, and my leaving you a treachery to myself. I will only ask you to try to forgive me: for I am sure I will never quite forgive myself. Somebody might write to me in the care of R. Towns & Co., Sydney, New South Wales, to tell me if you can forgive. But you will do quite right if you cannot. Only let me come and see you when we do return, or it will be a lame home-coming.

My wife suffered a good deal in our last, somewhat arduous voyage; all our party indeed suffered

except myself. Fanny is now better but she is still no very famous success in the way of health.

All the while I have been writing, I have had another matter in my eye; of which I scarce like to speak: You know of course that I am thinking of Sir Percy and his widow. The news has reached me in the shape of a newspaper cutting, I have no particulars. He had a sweet, original nature; I think I liked him better than ever I should have liked his father; I am sorry he was always a little afraid of me; if I had had more chance, he would have liked me too, we had so much in common, and I valued so much his fine soul, as honest as a dog's, and the romance of him, which was like a dog's too, and like a poet's at the same time. If he had not been Shelley's son, people would have thought more of him; and yet he was the better of the two, bar verses.

Please tell my dear Ida and Una that we think much of them, as well as of your dear self, and believe me, in words which you once allowed me to use (and I was very much affected when you did so), your affectionate friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## To Dr. Scott

This gentleman is the physician to whose assiduous care and kindness, as recorded in the dedication to *Underwoods*, Stevenson owed so much during his invalid years at Bournemouth.

*Apia, Samoa, January 20th*, 1890

MY DEAR SCOTT,—Shameful indeed that you should not have heard of me before! I have now been some twenty months in the South Seas, and

am (up to date) a person whom you would scarce know. I think nothing of long walks and rides: I was four hours and a half gone the other day, partly riding, partly climbing up a steep ravine. I have stood a six months' voyage on a copra schooner with about three months ashore on coral atolls, which means (except for cocoanuts to drink) no change whatever from ship's food. My wife suffered badly —it was too rough a business altogether—Lloyd suffered—and, in short, I was the only one of the party who 'kept my end up.'

I am so pleased with this climate that I have decided to settle; have even purchased a piece of land from three to four hundred acres, I know not which till the survey is completed, and shall only return next summer to wind up my affairs in England; thenceforth I mean to be a subject of the High Commissioner.

Now you would have gone longer yet without news of your truant patient, but that I have a medical discovery to communicate. I find I can (almost immediately) fight off a cold with liquid extract of coca; two or (if obstinate) three teaspoonfuls in the day for a variable period of from one to five days sees the cold generally to the door. I find it at once produces a glow, stops rigour, and though it makes one very uncomfortable, prevents the advance of the disease. Hearing of this influenza, it occurred to me that this might prove remedial; and perhaps a stronger exhibition—injections of cocaine, for instance—still better.

If on my return I find myself let in for this epidemic, which seems highly calculated to nip me in the

bud, I shall feel very much inclined to make the experiment. See what a gulf you may save me from if you shall have previously made it on *anima vili*, on some less important sufferer, and shall have found it worse than useless.

How is Miss Boodle and her family? Greeting to your brother and all friends in Bournemouth.—Yours very sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## TO CHARLES BAXTER

After a stay of four or five weeks at Apia, during which he had fallen more and more in love with Samoa and the Samoans, Stevenson took steamer again, this time for Sydney, where he had ordered his letters to await him. This and the two following letters were written during the passage. I again print in their original place a set of verses separately published in *Songs of Travel.*

*Februar den 3en* 1890
*Dampfer* Lübeck *zwischen Apia und Sydney*

MY DEAR CHARLES,—I have got one delightful letter from you, and heard from my mother of your kindness in going to see her. Thank you for that: you can in no way more touch and serve me. . . . Ay, ay, it is sad to sell 17; sad and fine were the old days: when I was away in Apemama, I wrote two copies of verse about Edinburgh and the past, so ink black, so golden bright. I will send them, if I can find them, for they will say something to you, and indeed one is more than half addressed to you. This is it—

TO MY OLD COMRADES

Do you remember—can we e'er forget?—
How, in the coiled perplexities of youth,
In our wild climate, in our scowling town,

We gloomed and shivered, sorrowed, sobbed, and
feared?
The belching winter wind, the missile rain,
The rare and welcome silence of the snows,
The laggard morn, the haggard day, the night,
The grimy spell of the nocturnal town,
Do you remember?—Ah, could one forget!
As when the fevered sick that all night long
Listed the wind intone, and hear at last
The ever-welcome voice of the chanticleer
Sing in the bitter hour before the dawn,—
With sudden ardour, these desire the day:

(Here a squall sends all flying.)

So sang in the gloom of youth the bird of hope;
So we, exulting, hearkened and desired.
For lo! as in the palace porch of life
We huddled with chimeras, from within—
How sweet to hear!—the music swelled and fell,
And through the breach of the revolving doors
What dreams of splendour blinded us and fled!
I have since then contended and rejoiced;
Amid the glories of the house of life
Profoundly entered, and the shrine beheld:
Yet when the lamp from my expiring eyes
Shall dwindle and recede, the voice of love
Fall insignificant on my closing ears,
What sound shall come but the old cry of the wind
In our inclement city? what return
But the image of the emptiness of youth,
Filled with the sound of footsteps and that voice
Of discontent and rapture and despair?
So, as in darkness, from the magic lamp,
The momentary pictures gleam and fade
And perish, and the night resurges—these
Shall I remember, and then all forget.

They're pretty second-rate, but felt. I can't be bothered to copy the other.

I have bought 314½ acres of beautiful land in the bush behind Apia; when we get the house built,

the garden laid, and cattle in the place, it will be something to fall back on for shelter and food; and if the island could stumble into political quiet, it is conceivable it might even bring a little income. . . . We range from 600 to 1500 feet, have five streams, waterfalls, precipices, profound ravines, rich table-lands, fifty head of cattle on the ground (if any one could catch them), a great view of forest, sea, mountains, the warships in the haven: really a noble place. Some day you are to take a long holiday and come and see us: it has been all planned.

With all these irons in the fire, and cloudy prospects, you may be sure I was pleased to hear a good account of business. I believed *The Master* was a sure card: I wonder why Henley thinks it grimy; grim it is, God knows, but sure not grimy, else I am the more deceived. I am sorry he did not care for it; I place it on the line with *Kidnapped* myself. We'll see as time goes on whether it goes above or falls below.

R. L. S.

## To E. L. Burlingame

The Editor of Scribner's Magazine had written asking him for fresh contributions, and he sends the set of verses addressed to Tembinoka, the king at Butaritari, and afterwards reprinted in *Songs of Travel*, beginning 'Let us who part like brothers part like bards.'

*S.S.* Lübeck [*between Apia and Sydney, February*] 1890

MY DEAR BURLINGAME,—I desire nothing better than to continue my relation with the Magazine, to which it pleases me to hear I have been useful. The only thing I have ready is the enclosed barbaric

piece. As soon as I have arrived in Sydney I shall send you some photographs, a portrait of Tembinoka, perhaps a view of the palace or of the 'matted men' at their singing; also T.'s flag, which my wife designed for him: in a word, what I can do best for you. It will be thus a foretaste of my book of travels. I shall ask you to let me have, if I wish it, the use of the plates made, and to make up a little tract of the verses and illustrations, of which you might send six copies to H.M. Tembinoka, King of Apemama, *via* Butaritari, Gilbert Islands. It might be best to send it by Crawford & Co., S.F. There is no postal service; and schooners must take it, how they may and when. Perhaps some such note as this might be prefixed:

*At my departure from the island of Apemama, for which you will look in vain in most atlases, the king and I agreed, since we both set up to be in the poetical way, that we should celebrate our separation in verse. Whether or not his majesty has been true to his bargain, the laggard posts of the Pacific may perhaps inform me in six months, perhaps not before a year. The following lines represent my part of the contract, and it is hoped, by their pictures of strange manners, they may entertain a civilized audience. Nothing throughout has been invented or exaggerated; the lady herein referred to as the author's Muse, has confined herself to stringing into rhyme facts and legends that I saw or heard during two months' residence upon the island.*

R. L. S.

You will have received from me a letter about *The Wrecker*. No doubt it is a new experiment for me, being disguised so much as a study of manners, and the interest turning on a mystery of the detective sort. I think there need be no hesitation about beginning it in the fall of the year. Lloyd has nearly finished his part, and I shall hope to send you very soon the MS. of about the first four-sevenths. At the same time, I have been employing myself in Samoa, collecting facts about the recent war; and I propose to write almost at once and to publish shortly a small volume, called I know not what—the War in Samoa, the Samoa Trouble, an Island War, the War of the Three Consuls, I know not—perhaps you can suggest. It was meant to be a part of my travel book; but material has accumulated on my hands until I see myself forced into volume form, and I hope it may be of use, if it come soon. I have a few photographs of the war, which will do for illustrations. It is conceivable you might wish to handle this in the Magazine, although I am inclined to think you won't, and to agree with you. But if you think otherwise, there it is. The travel letters (fifty of them) are already contracted for in papers; these I was quite bound to let M'Clure handle, as the idea was of his suggestion, and I always felt a little sore as to one trick I played him in the matter of the end-papers. The war-volume will contain some very interesting and picturesque details: more I can't promise for it. Of course the fifty newspaper letters will be simply patches chosen from the travel volume (or volumes) as it gets written.

But you see I have in hand:—

| | |
|---|---|
| Say half done. | 1. *The Wrecker.* |
| Lloyd's copy half done, mine not touched. | 2. *The Pearl Fisher* (a novel promised to the Ledger, and which will form, when it comes in book form, No. 2 of our *South Sea Yarns*). |
| Not begun, but all material ready. | 3. The War volume. |
| Ditto. | 4. The Big Travel Book, which includes the letters. |
| You know how they stand. | 5. The *Ballads.* |

*Excusez du peu!* And you see what madness it would be to make any fresh engagement. At the same time, you have *The Wrecker* and the War Volume, if you like either—or both—to keep my name in the Magazine.

It begins to look as if I should not be able to get any more ballads done this somewhile. I know the book would sell better if it were all ballads; and yet I am growing half tempted to fill up with some other verses. A good few are connected with my voyage, such as the 'Home of Tembinoka' sent herewith, and would have a sort of slight affinity to the *South Sea Ballads.* You might tell me how that strikes a stranger.

In all this, my real interest is with the travel volume, which ought to be of a really extraordinary interest. I am sending you 'Tembinoka' as he

stands; but there are parts of him that I hope to better, particularly in stanzas III. and II. I scarce feel intelligent enough to try just now; and I thought at any rate you had better see it, set it up if you think well, and let me have a proof; so, at least, we shall get the bulk of it straight. I have spared you Teñkoruti, Tembaitake, Tembinatake, and other barbarous names, because I thought the dentists in the States had work enough without my assistance; but my chief's name is TEMBINOKA, pronounced, according to the present quite modern habit in the Gilberts, Tembinok'. Compare in the margin Tengkorootch; a singular new trick, setting at defiance all South Sea analogy, for nowhere else do they show even the ability, far less the will, to end a word upon a consonant. Loia is Lloyd's name, ship becomes shipé, teapot tipoté, etc. Our admirable friend Herman Melville, of whom, since I could judge, I have thought more than ever, had no ear for languages whatever: his Hapar tribe should be Hapaa, etc.

But this is of no interest to you: suffice it, you see how I am as usual up to the neck in projects, and really all likely bairns this time. When will this activity cease? Too soon for me, I dare to say.

R. L. S.

## To James Payn

*February 4th*, 1890, *S.S.* Lübeck

MY DEAR JAMES PAYN,—In virtue of confessions in your last, you would at the present moment, if you were along of me, be sick; and I will ask you

to receive that as an excuse for my hand of write. Excuse a plain seaman if he regards with scorn the likes of you pore land-lubbers ashore now. (Reference to nautical ditty.) Which I may however be allowed to add that when eight months' mail was laid by my side one evening in Apia, and my wife and I sat up the most of the night to peruse the same—(precious indisposed we were next day in consequence)—no letter, out of so many, more appealed to our hearts than one from the pore, stick-in-the-mud, land-lubbering, common (or garden) Londoner, James Payn. Thank you for it; my wife says, 'Can't I see him when we get back to London?' I have told her the thing appeared to me within the spear of practical politix. (Why can't I spell and write like an honest, sober, god-fearing litry gent? I think it's the motion of the ship.) Here I was interrupted to play chess with the chief engineer; as I grow old, I prefer the 'athletic sport of cribbage,' of which (I am sure I misquote) I have just been reading in your delightful *Literary Recollections*. How you skim along, you and Andrew Lang (different as you are), and yet the only two who can keep a fellow smiling every page, and ever and again laughing out loud. I joke wi' deeficulty, I believe; I am not funny; and when I am, Mrs. Oliphant says I'm vulgar, and somebody else says (in Latin) that I'm a whore, which seems harsh and even uncalled for: I shall stick to weepers; a 5s. weeper, 2s. 6d. laugher, 1s. shocker.

My dear sir, I grow more and more idiotic; I cannot even feign sanity. Some time in the month

of June a stalwart weather-beaten man, evidently of seafaring antecedents, shall be observed wending his way between the Athenæum Club and Waterloo Place. Arrived off No. 17, he shall be observed to bring his head sharply to the wind, and tack into the outer haven. 'Captain Payn in the harbour?'—'Ay, ay, sir. What ship?'—'Barquentin R. L. S., nine hundred and odd days out from the port of Bournemouth, homeward bound, with yarns and curiosities.'

Who was it said, 'For God's sake, don't speak of it!' about Scott and his tears? He knew what he was saying. The fear of that hour is the skeleton in all our cupboards; that hour when the pastime and the livelihood go together; and—I am getting hard of hearing myself; a pore young child of forty, but new come frae my Mammy, O!

Excuse these follies, and accept the expression of all my regards.—Yours affectionately,

R. L. STEVENSON

## To Henry James

The *Solution* is a short story of Mr. Henry James, first published in a periodical and reprinted in the collection called *The Lesson of the Master* (Macmillans).

*Union Club, Sydney, February* 19, 1890

HERE—in this excellent civilised, antipodal club smoking-room, I have just read the first part of your *Solution*. Dear Henry James, it is an exquisite art; do not be troubled by the shadows of your French competitors: not one, not de Maupassant, could have done a thing more clean and fine; dry in touch, but the atmosphere (as in a fine summer sunset) rich

with colour and with perfume. I shall say no more; this note is De Solutione; except that I—that we—are all your sincere friends and hope to shake you by the hand in June.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

signed, sealed and
delivered as his act
and deed
and very thought of very thought,
this nineteenth of February in the year of our
Lord one thousand eight hundred ninety
and nothing.

## TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

Written while he was still in a white heat of indignation on behalf of Father Damien. He was not aware that Dr. Hyde's letter had been a private one, not meant for publicity, and later came to think he might have struck as effectively on behalf of Damien, without striking so fiercely against Dr. Hyde (see below, p. 214). 'Damon' is the Revd. F. Damon, a missionary in Hawaii.

*Union Club, Sydney, March* 5, 1890

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I understand the family keeps you somewhat informed. For myself I am in such a whirl of work and society, I can ill spare a moment. My health is excellent and has been here tried by abominable wet weather, and (what's waur) dinners and lunches. As this is like to be our metropolis, I have tried to lay myself out to be sociable with an eye to yoursel'. Several niceish people have turned up: Fanny has an evening, but she is about at the end of the virtuous effort, and shrinks from the approach of any fellow creature.

Have you seen Hyde's (Dr. not Mr.) letter about

Damien? That has been one of my concerns; I have an answer in the press; and have just written a difficult letter to Damon trying to prepare him for what (I fear) must be to him extremely painful. The answer is to come out as a pamphlet; of which I make of course a present to the publisher. I am not a cannibal, I would not eat the flesh of Dr. Hyde,—and it is conceivable it will make a noise in Honolulu. I have struck as hard as I knew how; nor do I think my answer can fail to do away (in the minds of all who see it) with the effect of Hyde's incredible and really villainous production. What a mercy I wasn't this man's *guest* in the *Morning Star*! I think it would have broke my heart.

Time for me to go!—I remain, with love,

R. L. S.

## To Charles Baxter

Stevenson had not been long at Sydney—just long enough to write and print the famous *Letter to Dr. Hyde* in defence of Father Damien—when, to his heavy disappointment, he fell ill again with one of his old bad attacks of fever and hemorrhage from the lungs. It was this experience which finally determined him to settle for good on his new island property in Samoa, which at first he had thought of rather as an occasional refuge and resting-place in the intervals between future projected yachting voyages.

*Union Club, Sydney, March 7th,* 1890

MY DEAR CHARLES,—I did not send off the enclosed before from laziness; having gone quite sick, and being a blooming prisoner here in the club, and indeed in my bedroom. I was in receipt of your letters and your ornamental photo, and was delighted to see how well you looked, and how reasonably well I stood. . . . I am sure I shall never come back

home except to die; I may do it, but shall always think of the move as suicidal, unless a great change comes over me, of which as yet I see no symptom. This visit to Sydney has smashed me handsomely; and yet I made myself a prisoner here in the club upon my first arrival. This is not encouraging for further ventures; Sydney winter—or, I might almost say, Sydney spring, for I came when the worst was over—is so small an affair, comparable to our June depression at home in Scotland. . . . The pipe is right again; it was the springs that had rusted, and ought to have been oiled. Its voice is now that of an angel; but, Lord! here in the club I dare not wake it! Conceive my impatience to be in my own backwoods and raise the sound of minstrelsy. What pleasures are to be compared with those of the Unvirtuous Virtuoso.—Yours ever affectionately, the Unvirtuous Virtuoso,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## To Sidney Colvin

To try and recover from the effects of his illness at Sydney, Steverson determined to take another voyage; and started accordingly in April with his party on a trading steamer, the *Janet Nicoll*, which took him by a long and devious course among many groups of islands that he had not yet visited, returning to Sydney in August by way of New Caledonia. On the first night out of Auckland harbour the voyage nearly came to a premature end through the blowing up of some trade fireworks, or materials for fireworks, which had been packed in the stateroom.

*S.S.* Janet Nicoll, *off Upolu* [*Spring* 1890]

MY DEAREST COLVIN.—I was sharply ill at Sydney, cut off, right out of bed, in this steamer on a fresh

island cruise, and have already reaped the benefit. We are excellently found this time, on a spacious vessel, with an excellent table; the captain, supercargo, our one fellow-passenger, etc., very nice; and the charterer, Mr. Henderson, the very man I could have chosen. The truth is, I fear, this life is the only one that suits me; so long as I cruise in the South Seas, I shall be well and happy—alas, no, I do not mean that, and *absit omen!*—I mean that, so soon as I cease from cruising, the nerves are strained, the decline commences, and I steer slowly but surely back to bedward. We left Sydney, had a cruel rough passage to Auckland, for the *Janet* is the worst roller I was ever aboard of. I was confined to my cabin, ports closed, self shied out of the berth, stomach (pampered till the day I left on a diet of perpetual eggnogg) revolted at ship's food and ship eating, in a frowsy bunk, clinging with one hand to the plate, with the other to the glass, and using the knife and fork (except at intervals) with the eyelid. No matter: I picked up hand over hand. After a day in Auckland, we set sail again; were blown up in the main cabin with calcium fires, as we left the bay. Let no man say I am unscientific: when I ran, on the alert, out of my state-room, and found the main cabin incarnadined with the glow of the last scene of a pantomime, I stopped dead: 'What is this?' said I. 'This ship is on fire, I see that; but why a pantomime?' And I stood and reasoned the point, until my head was so muddled with the fumes that I could not find the companion. A few seconds later, the captain had to enter crawl-

ing on his belly, and took days to recover (if he has recovered) from the fumes. By singular good fortune, we got the hose down in time and saved the ship, but Lloyd lost most of his clothes and a great part of our photographs was destroyed. Fanny saw the native sailors tossing overboard a blazing trunk; she stopped them in time, and behold it contained my manuscripts. Thereafter we had three (or two) days fine weather: then got into a gale of wind, with rain and a vexatious sea. As we drew into our anchorage in a bight of Savage Island, a man ashore told me afterwards the sight of the *Janet Nicoll* made him sick; and indeed it was rough play, though nothing to the night before. All through this gale I worked four to six hours per diem, spearing the ink-bottle like a flying fish, and holding my papers together as I might. For, of all things, what I was at was history—the Samoan business—and I had to turn from one to another of these piles of manuscript notes, and from one page to another in each, until I should have found employment for the hands of Briareus. All the same, this history is a godsend for a voyage; I can put in time, getting events co-ordinated and the narrative distributed, when my much-heaving numskull would be incapable of finish or fine style. At Savage we met the missionary barque *John Williams*. I tell you it was a great day for Savage Island: the path up the cliffs was crowded with gay islandresses (I like that feminine plural) who wrapped me in their embraces, and picked my pockets of all my tobacco, with a manner which a touch would have made re-

volting, but as it was, was simply charming, like the Golden Age. One pretty, little, stalwart minx, with a red flower behind her ear, had searched me with extraordinary zeal; and when, soon after, I missed my matches, I accused her (she still following us) of being the thief. After some delay, and with a subtle smile, she produced the box, gave me *one match*, and put the rest away again. Too tired to add more.—Your most affectionate

R. L. S.

## To E. L. Burlingame

The idea here discussed of a further series of essays to be contributed to Scribner's Magazine was never carried out.

*S.S.* Janet Nicoll *off Peru Island, Kingsmills Group, July 13th, '90*

MY DEAR BURLINGAME,—I am moved to write to you in the matter of the end papers. I am somewhat tempted to begin them again. Follow the reasons *pro* and *con*:—

1st. I must say I feel as if something in the nature of the end paper were a desirable finish to the number, and that the substitutes of occasional essays by occasional contributors somehow fail to fill the bill. Should you differ with me on this point, no more is to be said. And what follows must be regarded as lost words.

2nd. I am rather taken with the idea of continuing the work. For instance, should you have no distaste for papers of the class called *Random Memories*, I should enjoy continuing them (of course at intervals), and when they were done I have an idea

they might make a readable book. On the other hand, I believe a greater freedom of choice might be taken, the subjects more varied and more briefly treated, in somewhat approaching the manner of Andrew Lang in the *Sign of the Ship*; it being well understood that the broken sticks[1] method is one not very suitable (as Colonel Burke would say) to my genius, and not very likely to be pushed far in my practice. Upon this point I wish you to condense your massive brain. In the last lot I was promised, and I fondly expected to receive, a vast amount of assistance from intelligent and genial correspondents. I assure you, I never had a scratch of a pen from any one above the level of a village idiot, except once, when a lady sowed my head full of grey hairs by announcing that she was going to direct her life in future by my counsels. Will the correspondents be more copious and less irrelevant in the future? Suppose that to be the case, will they be of any use to me in my place of exile? Is it possible for a man in Samoa to be in touch with the great heart of the People? And is it not perhaps a mere folly to attempt, from so hopeless a distance, anything so delicate as a series of papers? Upon these points, perpend, and give me the results of your perpensions.

3rd. The emolument would be agreeable to your humble servant.

I have now stated all the *pros*, and the most of the *cons* are come in by the way. There follows, however, one immense Con (with a capital 'C'), which

[1] French *bâtons rompus*: disconnected thoughts or studies.

I beg you to consider particularly. I fear that, to be of any use for your magazine, these papers should begin with the beginning of a volume. Even supposing my hands were free, this would be now impossible for next year. You have to consider whether, supposing you have no other objection, it would be worth while to begin the series in the middle of a volume, or desirable to delay the whole matter until the beginning of another year.

Now supposing that the *cons* have it, and you refuse my offer, let me make another proposal, which you will be very inclined to refuse at the first off-go, but which I really believe might in time come to something. You know how the penny papers have their answers to correspondents. Why not do something of the same kind for the 'culchawed'? Why not get men like Stimson, Brownell, Professor James, Goldwin Smith, and others who will occur to you more readily than to me, to put and to answer a series of questions of intellectual and general interest, until at last you should have established a certain standard of matter to be discussed in this part of the Magazine?

I want you to get me bound volumes of the Magazine from its start. The Lord knows I have had enough copies; where they are I know not. A wandering author gathers no magazines.

*The Wrecker* is in no forrader state than in last reports. I have indeed got to a period when I cannot well go on until I can refresh myself on the proofs of the beginning. My respected collaborator, who handles the machine which is now addressing you,

has indeed carried his labours farther, but not, I am led to understand, with what we used to call a blessing; at least, I have been refused a sight of his latest labours. However, there is plenty of time ahead, and I feel no anxiety about the tale, except that it may meet with your approval.

All this voyage I have been busy over my *Travels*, which, given a very high temperature and the saloon of a steamer usually going before the wind, and with the cabins in front of the engines, has come very near to prostrating me altogether. You will therefore understand that there are no more poems. I wonder whether there are already enough, and whether you think that such a volume would be worth the publishing? I shall hope to find in Sydney some expression of your opinion on this point. Living as I do among—not the most cultured of mankind ('splendidly educated and perfect gentlemen when sober')—I attach a growing importance to friendly criticisms from yourself.

I believe that this is the most of our business. As for my health, I got over my cold in a fine style, but have not been very well of late. To my unaffected annoyance, the blood-spitting has started again. I find the heat of a steamer decidedly wearing and trying in these latitudes, and I am inclined to think the superior expedition rather dearly paid for. Still, the fact that one does not even remark the coming of a squall, nor feel relief on its departure, is a mercy not to be acknowledged without gratitude. The rest of the family seem to be doing fairly well; both seem less run down than they were on the

*Equator*, and Mrs. Stevenson very much less so. We have now been three months away, have visited about thirty-five islands, many of which were novel to us, and some extremely entertaining; some also were old acquaintances, and pleasant to revisit. In the meantime, we have really a capital time aboard the ship, in the most pleasant and interesting society, and with (considering the length and nature of the voyage) an excellent table. Please remember us all to Mr. Scribner, the young chieftain of the house, and the lady, whose health I trust is better. To Mrs. Burlingame we all desire to be remembered, and I hope you will give our news to Low, St. Gaudens, Faxon, and others of the faithful in the city. I shall probably return to Samoa direct, having given up all idea of returning to civilisation in the meanwhile. There, on my ancestral acres, which I purchased six months ago from a blind Scots blacksmith, you will please address me until further notice. The name of the ancestral acres is going to be Vàilima; but as at the present moment nobody else knows the name, except myself and the co-patentees, it will be safer, if less ambitious, to address R. L. S., Apia, Samoa. The ancestral acres run to upwards of three hundred; they enjoy the ministrations of five streams, whence the name. They are all at the present moment under a trackless covering of magnificent forest, which would be worth a great deal if it grew beside a railway terminus. To me, as it stands, it represents a handsome deficit. Obliging natives from the Cannibal Islands are now cutting it down at my expense. You would be

able to run your magazine to much greater advantage if the terms of authors were on the same scale with those of my cannibals. We have also a house about the size of a manufacturer's lodge. 'Tis but the egg of the future palace, over the details of which on paper Mrs. Stevenson and I have already shed real tears; what it will be when it comes to paying for it, I leave you to imagine. But if it can only be built as now intended, it will be with genuine satisfaction and a growunded pride that I shall welcome you at the steps of my Old Colonial Home, when you land from the steamer on a long-merited holiday. I speak much at my ease; yet I do not know, I may be now an outlaw, a bankrupt, the abhorred of all good men. I do not know, you probably do. Has Hyde[1] turned upon me? Have I fallen like Danvers Carew?

It is suggested to me that you might like to know what will be my future society. Three consuls, all at loggerheads with one another, or at the best in a clique of two against one; three different sects of missionaries, not upon the best of terms; and the Catholics and Protestants in a condition of unhealable ill-feeling as to whether a wooden drum ought or ought not to be beaten to announce the time of school. The native population, very genteel, very songful, very agreeable, very good-looking, chronically spoiling for a fight (a circumstance not to be entirely neglected in the design of the palace). As for the white population of (technically, 'The

[1] The Rev. Dr. Hyde, of Honolulu: in reference to Stevenson's letter on Father Damien.

Beach'), I don't suppose it is possible for any person not thoroughly conversant with the South Seas to form the smallest conception of such a society, with its grog-shops, its apparently unemployed hangers-on, its merchants of all degrees of respectability and the reverse. The paper, of which I must really send you a copy—if yours were really a live magazine, you would have an exchange with the editor: I assure you, it has of late contained a great deal of matter about one of your contributors—rejoices in the name of Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser. The advertisements in the Advertiser are permanent, being simply subsidies for its existence. A dashing warfare of newspaper correspondence goes on between the various residents, who are rather fond of recurring to one another's antecedents. But when all is said, there are a lot of very nice, pleasant people, and I don't know that Apia is very much worse than half a hundred towns that I could name.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## TO CHARLES BAXTER

As above indicated, on the way between Samoa and Sydney Stevenson left the *Janet Nicoll* for a week's stay in New Caledonia, during which he was hospitably received by the French officials.

*Hotel Sebastopol, Noumea, August* 1890

MY DEAR CHARLES,—I have stayed here a week while Lloyd and my wife continue to voyage in the *Janet Nicoll*; this I did, partly to see the convict system, partly to shorten my stay in the extreme cold

—hear me with my extreme! *moi qui suis originaire d'Edimbourg*—of Sydney at this season. I am feeling very seedy, utterly fatigued, and overborne with sleep. I have a fine old gentleman of a doctor, who attends and cheers and entertains, if he does not cure me; but even with his ministrations I am almost incapable of the exertion sufficient for this letter; and I am really, as I write, falling down with sleep. What is necessary to say, I must try to say shortly. Lloyd goes to clear out our establishments: pray keep him in funds, if I have any; if I have not, pray try to raise them. Here is the idea: to install ourselves, at the risk of bankruptcy, in Samoa. It is not the least likely it will pay (although it may); but it is almost certain it will support life, with very few external expenses. If I die, it will be an endowment for the survivors, at least for my wife and Lloyd; and my mother, who might prefer to go home, has her own. Hence I believe I shall do well to hurry my installation. The letters are already in part done; in part done is a novel for Scribner; in the course of the next twelve months I should receive a considerable amount of money. I am aware I had intended to pay back to my capital some of this. I am now of opinion I should act foolishly. Better to build the house and have a roof and farm of my own; and thereafter, with a livelihood assured, save and repay. . . . There is my livelihood, all but books and wine, ready in a nutshell; and it ought to be more easy to save and to repay afterwards. Excellent, say you, but will you save and will you repay? I do not know, said the Bell of Old Bow.

. . . It seems clear to me. . . . The deuce of the affair is that I do not know when I shall see you and Colvin. I guess you will have to come and see me: many a time already we have arranged the details of your visit in the yet unbuilt house on the mountain. I shall be able to get decent wine from Noumea. We shall be able to give you a decent welcome, and talk of old days. *Apropos* of old days, do you remember still the phrase we heard in Waterloo Place? I believe you made a piece for the piano on that phrase. Pray, if you remember it, send it me in your next. If you find it impossible to write correctly, send it me *à la récitative*, and indicate the accents. Do you feel (you must) how strangely heavy and stupid I am? I must at last give up and go sleep; I am simply a rag.

*The morrow.*—I feel better, but still dim and groggy. To-night I go to the governor's; such a lark—no dress clothes—twenty-four hours' notice—able-bodied Polish tailor—suit made for a man with the figure of a puncheon—same hastily altered for self with the figure of a bodkin—sight inconceivable. Never mind; dress clothes, 'which nobody can deny'; and the officials have been all so civil that I liked neither to refuse nor to appear in mufti. Bad dress clothes only prove you are a grisly ass; no dress clothes, even when explained, indicate a want of respect. I wish you were here with me to help me dress in this wild raiment, and to accompany me to M. Noel-Pardon's. I cannot say what I would give if there came a knock now at the door and you came in. I guess Noel-Pardon would go

begging, and we might burn the fr. 200 dress clothes in the back garden for a bonfire; or what would be yet more expensive and more humorous, get them once more expanded to fit you, and when that was done, a second time cut down for my gossamer dimensions.

I hope you never forget to remember me to your father, who has always a place in my heart, as I hope I have a little in his. His kindness helped me infinitely when you and I were young; I recall it with gratitude and affection in this town of convicts at the world's end. There are very few things, my dear Charles, worth mention: on a retrospect of life, the day's flash and colour, one day with another, flames, dazzles, and puts to sleep; and when the days are gone, like a fast-flying thaumatrope, they make but a single pattern. Only a few things stand out; and among these—most plainly to me—Rutland Square.—Ever, my dear Charles, your affectionate friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

*P.S.*—Just returned from trying on the dress clo'. Lord, you should see the coat! It stands out at the waist like a bustle, the flaps cross in front, the sleeves are like bags.

## TO E. L. BURLINGAME

Proceeding from New Caledonia to Sydney, Stevenson again made a stay there of about a month, before going to settle in his new island home and superintend the operations of planting and building. The next letter is in acknowledgment of proofs received from Messrs. Scribner of a proposed volume of verse to contain,

besides *Ticonderoga* and the two ballads on Marquesan and Tahitian legends, a number of the other miscellaneous verses which he had written in the course of his travels. In the end, the ballads only stood for publication at this time; the other verses were reserved, and have been posthumously published under the title *Songs of Travel.*

*Union Club, Sydney* [*August* 1890]

MY DEAR BURLINGAME,—

*Ballads.*

The deuce is in this volume. It has cost me more botheration and dubiety than any other I ever took in hand. On one thing my mind is made up: the verses at the end have no business there, and throw them down. Many of them are bad, many of the rest want nine years' keeping, and the remainder are not relevant—throw them down; some I never want to hear of more, others will grow in time towards decent items in a second *Underwoods* —and in the meanwhile, down with them! At the same time, I have a sneaking idea the ballads are not altogether without merit—I don't know if they're poetry, but they're good narrative, or I'm deceived. (You've never said one word about them, from which I astutely gather you are dead set against: 'he was a diplomatic man'—extract from epitaph of E. L. B.—'and remained on good terms with Minor Poets.') You will have to judge: one of the Gladstonian trinity of paths must be chosen. (1st) Either publish the five ballads, such as they are, in a volume called *Ballads*; in which case pray send sheets at once to Chatto and Windus. Or (2nd) write and tell me you think the book too small, and I'll try and get into the mood to do some more. Or (3rd) write and tell me the whole thing is a

blooming illusion; in which case draw off some twenty copies for my private entertainment, and charge me with the expense of the whole dream.

In the matter of rhyme no man can judge himself; I am at the world's end, have no one to consult, and my publisher holds his tongue. I call it unfair and almost unmanly. I do indeed begin to be filled with animosity; Lord, wait till you see the continuation of *The Wrecker*, when I introduce some New York publishers. . . . It's a good scene; the quantities you drink and the really hideous language you are represented as employing may perhaps cause you one tithe of the pain you have inflicted by your silence on, sir, The Poetaster,

R. L. S.

Lloyd is off home; my wife and I dwell sundered: she in lodgings, preparing for the move; I here in the club, and at my old trade—bedridden. Naturally, the visit home is given up; we only wait our opportunity to get to Samoa, where, please, address me.

Have I yet asked you to despatch the books and papers left in your care to me at Apia, Samoa? I wish you would, *quam primum.*

R. L. S.

## To Henry James

*Union Club, Sydney, August* 1890

MY DEAR HENRY JAMES,—Kipling is too clever to live. The *Bête Humaine* [1] I had already perused in Noumea, listening the while to the strains of the

[1] By Émile Zola.

convict band. He is a Beast; but not human, and, to be frank, not very interesting. 'Nervous maladies: the homicidal ward,' would be the better name: O, this game gets very tedious.

Your two long and kind letters have helped to entertain the old familiar sickbed. So has a book called *The Bondman*, by Hall Caine; I wish you would look at it. I am not half-way through yet. Read the book, and communicate your views. Hall Caine, by the way, appears to take Hugo's view of History and Chronology. (*Later*; the book doesn't keep up; it gets very wild.)

I must tell you plainly—I can't tell Colvin—I do not think I shall come to England more than once, and then it'll be to die. Health I enjoy in the tropics; even here, which they call sub- or semi-tropical, I come only to catch cold. I have not been out since my arrival; live here in a nice bedroom by the fireside, and read books and letters from Henry James, and send out to get his *Tragic Muse*, only to be told they can't be had as yet in Sydney, and have altogether a placid time. But I can't go out! The thermometer was nearly down to 50° the other day—no temperature for me, Mr. James: how should I do in England? I fear not at all. Am I very sorry? I am sorry about seven or eight people in England, and one or two in the States. And outside of that, I simply prefer Samoa. These are the words of honesty and soberness. (I am fasting from all but sin, coughing, *The Bondman*, a couple of eggs and a cup of tea.) I was never fond of towns, houses, society, or (it seems) civilisation.

Nor yet it seems was I ever very fond of (what is technically called) God's green earth. The sea, islands, the islanders, the island life and climate, make and keep me truly happier. These last two years I have been much at sea, and I have *never wearied*; sometimes I have indeed grown impatient for some destination; more often I was sorry that the voyage drew so early to an end; and never once did I lose my fidelity to blue water and a ship. It is plain, then, that for me my exile to the place of schooners and islands can be in no sense regarded as a calamity.

Good-bye just now: I must take a turn at my proofs.

*N.B.*—Even my wife has weakened about the sea. She wearied, the last time we were ashore, to get afloat again.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

## To Marcel Schwob

*Union Club, Sydney, August 19th*, 1890

MY DEAR MR. SCHWOB,—*Mais, alors, vous avez tous les bonheurs, vous!* More about Villon; it seems incredible: when it is put in order, pray send it me.

You wish to translate the *Black Arrow*: dear sir, you are hereby authorised; but I warn you, I do not like the work. Ah, if you, who know so well both tongues, and have taste and instruction—if you would but take a fancy to translate a book of mine that I myself admired—for we sometimes admire

our own—or I do—with what satisfaction would the authority be granted! But these things are too much to expect. *Vous ne détestez pas alors mes bonnes femmes? moi, je les déteste.* I have never pleased myself with any women of mine save two character parts, one of only a few lines—the Countess of Rosen, and Madame Desprez in the *Treasure of Franchard.*

I had indeed one moment of pride about my poor *Black Arrow*: Dickon Crookback I did, and I do, think is a spirited and possible figure. Shakespeare's—O, if we can call that cocoon Shakespeare!—Shakespeare's is spirited—one likes to see the untaught athlete butting against the adamantine ramparts of human nature, head down, breach up; it reminds us how trivial we are to-day, and what safety resides in our triviality. For spirited it may be, but O, sure not possible! I love Dumas and I love Shakespeare: you will not mistake me when I say that the Richard of the one reminds me of the Porthos of the other; and if by any sacrifice of my own literary baggage I could clear the *Vicomte de Bragelonne* of Porthos, *Jekyll* might go, and the *Master*, and the *Black Arrow*, you may be sure, and I should think my life not lost for mankind if half a dozen more of my volumes must be thrown in.

The tone of your pleasant letters makes me egotistical; you make me take myself too gravely. Comprehend how I have lived much of my time in France, and loved your country, and many of its people, and all the time was learning that which your country has to teach—breathing in rather that

atmosphere of art which can only there be breathed; and all the time knew—and raged to know—that I might write with the pen of angels or of heroes, and no Frenchman be the least the wiser! And now steps in M. Marcel Schwob, writes me the most kind encouragement, and reads and understands, and is kind enough to like my work.

I am just now overloaded with work. I have two huge novels on hand—*The Wrecker* and the *Pearl Fisher*,[1] in collaboration with my stepson: the latter, the *Pearl Fisher*, I think highly of, for a black, ugly, trampling, violent story, full of strange scenes and striking characters. And then I am about waist-deep in my big book on the South Seas: *the* big book on the South Seas it ought to be, and shall. And besides, I have some verses in the press, which, however, I hesitate to publish. For I am no judge of my own verse; self-deception is there so facile. All this and the cares of an impending settlement in Samoa keep me very busy, and a cold (as usual) keeps me in bed.

Alas, I shall not have the pleasure to see you yet awhile, if ever. You must be content to take me as a wandering voice, and in the form of occasional letters from recondite islands: and address me, if you will be good enough to write, to Apia, Samoa. My stepson, Mr. Osbourne, goes home meanwhile to arrange some affairs; it is not unlikely he may go to Paris to arrange about the illustrations to my South Seas; in which case I shall ask him to call upon you, and give you some word of our outland-

[1] Afterwards re-named *The Ebb-Tide*.

ish destinies. You will find him intelligent, I think; and I am sure, if (*par hasard*) you should take any interest in the islands, he will have much to tell you.—Herewith I conclude, and am your obliged and interested correspondent,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

*P.S.*—The story you refer to has got lost in the post.

## TO ANDREW LANG

*Union Club, Sydney* [*August* 1890]

MY DEAR LANG,—I observed with a great deal of surprise and interest that a controversy in which you have been taking sides at home, in yellow London, hinges in part at least on the Gilbert Islanders and their customs in burial. Nearly six months of my life has been passed in the group: I have revisited it but the other day; and I make haste to tell you what I know. The upright stones—I enclose you a photograph of one on Apemama—are certainly connected with religion; I do not think they are adored. They stand usually on the windward shore of the islands, that is to say, apart from habitation (on *enclosed islands*, where the people live on the sea side, I do not know how it is, never having lived on one). I gathered from Tembinoka, Rex Apemamae, that the pillars were supposed to fortify the island from invasion: spiritual martellos. I think he indicated they were connected with the cult of Tenti—pronounce almost as chintz in English, the *t* being ex-

plosive; but you must take this with a grain of salt, for I know no word of Gilbert Island; and the King's English, although creditable, is rather vigorous than exact. Now, here follows the point of interest to you: such pillars, or standing stones, have no connection with graves. The most elaborate grave that I have ever seen in the group—to be certain—is in the form of a *raised border* of gravel, usually strewn with broken glass. One—of which I cannot be sure that it was a grave, for I was told by one that it was, and by another that it was not—consisted of a mound about breast high in an excavated taro swamp, on the top of which was a child's house, or rather *maniapa*—that is to say, shed, or open house, such as is used in the group for social or political gatherings—so small that only a child could creep under its eaves. I have heard of another great tomb on Apemama, which I did not see; but here again, by all accounts, no sign of a standing stone. My report would be—no connection between standing stones and sepulture. I shall, however, send on the terms of the problem to a highly intelligent resident trader, who knows more than perhaps any one living, white or native, of the Gilbert group; and you shall have the result. In Samoa, whither I return for good, I shall myself make inquiries; up to now, I have neither seen nor heard of any standing stones in that group.—Yours,

R. L. Stevenson

## To Miss Boodle

Exactly what tale of doings in the garret at Skerryvore had been related to Stevenson (in the character of Robin Lewison) by his correspondent (in the character of Miss Green) cannot well be gathered from this reply. But the letter is interesting as containing the only mention of certain schemes of romance afterwards abandoned.

*Union Club, Sydney, 1st September* 1890

MY DEAR MISS BOODLE,—I find you have been behaving very ill: *been* very ill, in fact. I find this hard to forgive; probably should not forgive it at all if Robin Lewison had not been sick himself and a wretched sick-room prisoner in this club for near a month. Well, the best and bravest sometimes fail. But who is Miss Green? Don't know her! I knew a lady of an exceedingly generous and perfervid nature—worthy to be suspected of Scotch blood for the perfervidness—equipped with a couple—perhaps a brace sounds better English—of perfervid eyes—with a certain graceful gaucherie of manner, almost like a child's, and that is at once the highest point of gaucherie and grace—a friend everybody I ever saw was delighted to see come and sorry to see go. Yes, I knew that lady, and can see her now. But who was Miss Green? There is something amiss here. Either the Robin Lewisons have been very shabbily treated, or—and this is the serious part of the affair—somebody unknown to me has been entrusted with the key of the Skerryvore garret. This may go as far as the Old Bailey, ma'am.

But why should I gird at you or anybody, when the truth is we are the most miserable sinners in the

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world? For we are not coming home, I dare not. Even coming to Sydney has made me quite ill, and back I go to Samoa, whither please address—Apia, Samoa—(and remember it is Sámó-a, a spondee to begin with, or Sahmoa, if you prefer that writing)—back I and my wife go to Samoa to live on our landed estate with four black labour boys in a kind of a sort of house, which Lloyd will describe to you. For he has gone to England: receive him like a favour and a piece of cake; he is our greeting to friends.

I paused here to put in the date on the first page. I am precious nearly through my fortieth year, thinks I to myself. Must be nearly as old as Miss Green, thinks I. O, come! I exclaimed, not as bad as that! Some lees of youth about the old remnant yet.

My amiable Miss Green, I beg you to give me news of your health, and if it may be good news. And when you shall have seen Lloyd, to tell me how his reports of the South Seas and our new circumstances strike such an awfully old person as yourself, and to tell me if you ever received a letter I sent you from Hawaii. I remember thinking—or remember remembering rather—it was (for me) quite a long respectable communication. Also, you might tell me if you got my war-whoop and scalping-knife assault on *le nommé Hyde*.

I ought not to forgot to say your tale fetched me (Miss Green) by its really vile probability. If we had met that man in Honolulu he would have done it, and Miss Green would have done it. Only, alas! there is no completed novel lying in the garret: would there were! It should be out to-morrow with the

name to it, and relieve a kind of tightness in the money market much deplored in our immediate circle. To be sure (now I come to think of it) there are some seven chapters of *The Great North Road*; three, I think, of *Robin Run the Hedge*, given up when some nefarious person pre-empted the name; and either there—or somehere else—likely New York —one chapter of *David Balfour*, and five or six of the *Memoirs of Henry Shovel*. That's all. But Lloyd and I have one-half of *The Wrecker* in type, and a good part of *The Pearl Fisher* (O, a great and grisly tale that!) in MS. And I have a projected, entirely planned love-story—everybody will think it dreadfully improper, I'm afraid—called *Cannonmills*. And I've a vague, rosy haze before me—a love-story too, but not improper—called *The Rising Sun*. (It's the name of the wayside inn where the story, or much of the story, runs; but it's a kind of a pun: it means the stirring up of a boy by falling in love, and how he rises in the estimation of a girl who despised him, though she liked him, and had befriended him; I really scarce see beyond their childhood yet, but I want to go beyond, and make each out-top the other by successions: it should be pretty and true if I could do it.) Also I have my big book, *The South Seas*, always with me, and a sair handfu'—if I may be allowed to speak Scotch to Miss Green—a sair handfu' it is likely to be. All this literary gossip I bestow upon you *entre confrères*, Miss Green, which is little more than fair, Miss Green.

Allow me to remark that it is now half-past twelve o'clock of the living night; I should certainly be

ashamed of myself, and you also; for this is no time of the night for Miss Green to be colloguing with a comparatively young gentleman of forty. So with all the kindest wishes to yourself, and all at Lostock, and all friends in Hants, or over the borders in Dorset, I bring my folly to an end. Please believe, even when I am silent, in my real affection; I need not say the same for Fanny, more obdurately silent, not less affectionate than I.—Your friend,

ROBERT—ROBIN LEWISON

(Nearly had it wrong—force of habit.)

## To Mrs. Charles Fairchild

*Union Club, Sydney* [*September* 1890]

MY DEAR MRS. FAIRCHILD,—I began a letter to you on board the *Janet Nicoll* on my last cruise, wrote, I believe, two sheets, and ruthlessly destroyed the flippant trash. Your last has given me great pleasure and some pain, for it increased the consciousness of my neglect. Now, this must go to you, whatever it is like.

. . . It is always harshness that one regrets. . . . I regret also my letter to Dr. Hyde. Yes, I do; I think it was barbarously harsh; if I did it now, I would defend Damien no less well, and give less pain to those who are alive. These promptings of good-humour are not all sound; the three times three, cheer boys, cheer, and general amiability business rests on a sneaking love of popularity, the most insidious enemy of virtue. On the whole, it was

virtuous to defend Damien; but it was harsh to strike so hard at Dr. Hyde. When I wrote the letter, I believed he would bring an action, in which case I knew I could be beggared. And as yet there has come no action; the injured Doctor has contented himself up to now with the (truly innocuous) vengeance of calling me a 'Bohemian Crank,' and I have deeply wounded one of his colleagues whom I esteemed and liked.

Well, such is life. You are quite right; our civilisation is a hollow fraud, all the fun of life is lost by it; all it gains is that a larger number of persons can continue to be contemporaneously unhappy on the surface of the globe. O, unhappy!—there is a big word and a false—continue to be not nearly—by about twenty per cent.—so happy as they might be: that would be nearer the mark.

When—observe that word, which I will write again and larger—WHEN you come to see us in Samoa, you will see for yourself a healthy and happy people.

You see, you are one of the very few of our friends rich enough to come and see us; and when my house is built, and the road is made, and we have enough fruit planted and poultry and pigs raised, it is undeniable that you must come—must is the word; that is the way in which I speak to ladies. You and Fairchild, anyway—perhaps my friend Blair—we'll arrange details in good time. It will be the salvation of your souls, and make you willing to die.

Let me tell you this: In '74 or 5 there came to stay with my father and mother a certain Mr. Seed,

a prime minister or something of New Zealand. He spotted what my complaint was; told me that I had no business to stay in Europe; that I should find all I cared for, and all that was good for me, in the Navigator Islands; sat up till four in the morning persuading me, demolishing my scruples. And I resisted: I refused to go so far from my father and mother. O, it was virtuous, and O, wasn't it silly! But my father, who was always my dearest, got to his grave without that pang; and now in 1890, I (or what is left of me) go at last to the Navigator Islands. God go with us! It is but a Pisgah sight when all is said; I go there only to grow old and die; but when you come, you will see it is a fair place for the purpose.

Flaubert[1] has not turned up; I hope he will soon; I knew of him only through Maxime Descamps.—With kindest messages to yourself and all of yours, I remain

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

[1] His *Letters*.

# XI

## LIFE IN SAMOA

### FIRST YEAR AT VAILIMA

NOVEMBER 1890–DECEMBER 1891

RETURNING from Sydney at the end of October 1890, Stevenson and his wife at once took up their abode in the cottage, or 'rough barrack,' as he calls it, which had been built for them in the clearing at Vailima during the months of their absence at Sydney and on their cruise in the *Equator*. Mr. Lloyd Osbourne in the meantime had started for England to wind up the family affairs at Bournemouth. During the first few months, as will be seen by the following letters, the conditions of life at Vailima were rough to the point of hardship. But matters soon mended; the work of clearing and planting went on under the eye of the master and mistress diligently and in the main successfully, though not of course without complications and misadventures. Ways and means of catering were found, and abundance began to reign in place of the makeshifts and privations of the first days. A more commodious house was soon built, and later rebuilt in another position, while plans for one much larger

were considered and for the present held over. The attempt made at first to work the establishment by means of white servants and head-men indoors and out proved unsatisfactory, and was gradually superseded by the formation of an efficient native staff, which in course of time developed itself into something like a small, devoted feudal clan.

During the earlier months of 1891 Stevenson was not in continuous residence on his new property, but went away on two excursions, the first to Sydney to meet his mother; the second, in company of the American Consul Mr. Sewall, to Tutuila, a neighbouring island of the Samoan group. Of the latter, to him very interesting, trip, the correspondence contains only the beginning of an account abruptly broken off: more will be found in the extracts from his diary given in Mr. Graham Balfour's *Life* (ed. 1906, pp. 312 f.). During part of the spring he was fortunate in having the company of two distinguished Americans, the painter Lafarge and the historian Henry Adams, in addition to that of the local planters, traders, and officials, a singular and singularly mixed community. After some half-year's residence he began to realise that the arrangements made for the government of Samoa by treaty between the three powers England, Germany, and America were not working nor promising to work well. Stevenson was no abstracted student or dreamer; the human interests and human duties lying immediately about him were ever the first in his eyes; and he found

himself drawn deeply into the complications of local politics, as so active a spirit could not fail to be drawn, however little taste he might have for the work.

He kept in the meantime at a fair level of health, and among the multitude of new interests was faithful in the main business of his life—that is, to literature. He did not cease to toil uphill at the heavy task in preparing for serial publication the letters, or more properly chapters, on the South Seas. He planned and began delightedly his happiest tale of South Sea life, *The High Woods of Ulufanua*, afterwards changed to *The Beach of Falesâ*; conceived the scheme, which was never carried out, of working two of his old conceptions into one long genealogical novel or fictitious family history to be called *The Shovels of Newton French*; and in the latter part of the year worked hard in continuation of *The Wrecker*. Having completed this during November, he turned at once, from a sense of duty rather than from any literary inspiration, to the *Footnote to History*, a laboriously prepared and minutely conscientious account of recent events in Samoa.

From his earliest days at Vailima, determined that our intimacy should suffer no diminution by absence, Stevenson began, to my great pleasure, the practice of writing me a monthly budget containing a full account of his doings and interests.

For the first seven or eight months, the pursuits of the enthusiastic farmer, planter, and overseer filled

these letters delightfully, to the exclusion of almost everything else except references to his books projected or in hand. Later these interests began to give place in his letters to those of the local politician, immersed in affairs which seemed to me exasperatingly petty and obscure, however grave the potential European complications which lay behind them. At any rate, they were hard to follow intelligently from the other side of the globe; and it was a relief whenever his correspondence turned to matters literary or domestic, or humours of his own mind and character. These letters, or so much of them as seemed suitable for publication, were originally printed separately, in the year following the writer's death, under the title *Vailima Letters*. They are here placed, with some additions, in chronological order among those addressed to other friends or acquaintances. During this first year at Vailima his general correspondence was not nearly so large as it afterwards became; Mr. Burlingame, as representative of the house of Scribner, receiving the lion's share next to myself.

For the love of Stevenson I will ask readers to take the small amount of pains necessary to grasp and remember the main facts of Samoan politics in the ten years 1889–99. At the date when he settled in Vailima the government of the islands had lately been re-ordered between the three powers interested —namely, Germany, England, and the United States— at the Convention of Berlin (July 14, 1889).

The rivalries and jealousies of these three powers, complicated with the conflicting claims of various native kings or chiefs, had for some time kept the affairs of the islands dangerously embroiled. Under the Berlin Convention, Malietoa Laupepa, who had previously been deposed and deported by the Germans in favour of a nominee of their own, was reinstated as king, to the exclusion of his kinsman, the powerful and popular Mataafa, whose titles were equally good and abilities certainly greater, but who was specially obnoxious to the Germans owing to his resistance to them during the troubles of the preceding years. In the course of that resistance a small German force had been worsted in a petty skirmish at Fagalii, and resentment at this affront to the national pride was for several years one of the chief obstacles to the reconciliation of contending interests. For a time the two kinsmen, Laupepa and Mataafa, lived on amicable terms, but presently differences arose between them. Mataafa had expected to occupy a position of influence in the government: finding himself ignored, he withdrew to a camp (Malie) a few miles outside the town of Apia, where he lived in semi-royal state as a sort of passive rebel or rival to the recognised king. In the meantime, in the course of the year 1891, the two white officials appointed under the Berlin Convention—namely, the Chief Justice, a Swedish gentleman named Cedercrantz, and the President of the Council, Baron Senfft von Pilsach—had come out to the

islands and entered on their duties. These gentlemen soon proved themselves unfitted for their task to a degree both disastrous and grotesque. Almost the entire white community were soon against them; with the native population they had no influence or credit; affairs both political and municipal went from bad to worse; and the consuls of the three powers, acting as an official board of advisers to the king, could not do much to mend them. To the impropriety of some of the official proceedings Stevenson felt compelled to call attention in a series of letters to the Times, the first of which appeared in 1891, the remainder in 1892. He had formed the conviction that for the cure of Samoan troubles two things were necessary: first and above all, the reconciliation of Laupepa and Mataafa; secondly, the supersession of the unlucky Chief Justice and President by men better qualified for their tasks. To effect the former purpose, he made his one practical intromission in local politics, and made it unsuccessfully. The motive of his letters to the Times was the hope to effect the second. In this matter, after undergoing the risk, which was at one moment serious, of deportation, he in the end saw his wishes fulfilled. The first Chief Justice and President were replaced by better qualified persons in the course of 1893. But meantime the muddle had grown to a head. In the autumn of that year war broke out between the partisans of Laupepa and Mataafa: the latter were defeated, and Mataafa exiled to a

distant island. At the close of the following year Stevenson died. Three years later followed the death of Laupepa: then came more confused rivalries between various claimants to the kingly title. The Germans, having by this time come round to Stevenson's opinion, backed the claims of Mataafa, which they had before stubbornly disallowed, while the English and Americans stood for another candidate. In 1899 these differences resulted in a calamitous and unjustifiable action, the bombardment of native villages for several successive days by English and American war-ships. As a matter of urgent necessity, to avert worse things, new negotiations were set on foot between the three powers, with the result that England withdrew her claims in Samoa altogether, America was satisfied with the small island of Tutuila with its fine harbour of Pago-pago, while the two larger islands of Upolu and Savaii were ceded to Germany. German officials have governed them well and peacefully ever since, with the restored Mataafa established in a recognised position of headship among the native chiefs. While Stevenson yet lived, he was obnoxious to the German official world. But his name and memory are now held in honour by them, his policy to a large extent practically followed, and he would have been the first to acknowledge the merits of the new order had he lived to witness it.

These remarks, following the subject down to what remains for the present its historic conclusion,

will, I hope, be enough to clear it for the present purpose out of the reader's way and enable him to understand as much as is necessary of the political allusions in this and the following sections of the correspondence.

It need only be added that in reading the following pages it must be borne in mind that Mulinuu and Malie, the places respectively of Laupepa's and Mataafa's residence, are also used to signify their respective parties and followings.

## To Sidney Colvin

During the absence of the Stevensons at Sydney some eight acres of the Vailima property had been cleared of jungle, a cottage roughly built on the clearing, and something done towards making the track up the hill from Apia into a practicable road. They occupied the cottage at once, and the following letters narrate of the sequel.

*In the Mountain, Apia, Samoa,*
*Monday, November 2nd,* 1890

MY DEAR COLVIN,—This is a hard and interesting and beautiful life that we lead now. Our place is in a deep cleft of Vaea Mountain, some six hundred feet above the sea, embowered in forest, which is our strangling enemy, and which we combat with axes and dollars. I went crazy over outdoor work, and had at last to confine myself to the house, or literature must have gone by the board. *Nothing* is so interesting as weeding, clearing, and path-making; the oversight of labourers becomes a disease; it is quite an effort not to drop into the farmer; and it does make you feel so well. To come down

covered with mud and drenched with sweat and rain after some hours in the bush, change, rub down, and take a chair in the verandah, is to taste a quiet conscience. And the strange thing that I mark is this: If I go out and make sixpence, bossing my labourers and plying the cutlass or the spade, idiot conscience applauds me; if I sit in the house and make twenty pounds, idiot conscience wails over my neglect and the day wasted. For near a fortnight I did not go beyond the verandah; then I found my rush of work run out, and went down for the night to Apia; put in Sunday afternoon with our consul, 'a nice young man,' dined with my friend H. J. Moors in the evening, went to church—no less—at the white and half-white church—I had never been before, and was much interested; the woman I sat next *looked* a full-blood native, and it was in the prettiest and readiest English that she sang the hymns; back to Moors', where we yarned of the islands, being both wide wanderers, till bedtime; bed, sleep, breakfast, horse saddled; round to the mission, to get Mr. Clarke to be my interpreter; over with him to the King's whom I have not called on since my return; received by that mild old gentleman; have some interesting talk with him about Samoan superstitions and my land—the scene of a great battle in his (Malietoa Laupepa's) youth—the place which we have cleared the platform of his fort —the gulley of the stream full of dead bodies—the fight rolled off up Vaea mountain-side; back with Clarke to the mission; had a bit of lunch and consulted over a queer point of missionary policy just arisen, about our new Town Hall and the balls there

—too long to go into, but a quaint example of the intricate questions which spring up daily in the missionary path.[1]

Then off up the hill; Jack very fresh, the sun (close on noon) staring hot, the breeze very strong and pleasant; the ineffable green country all round —gorgeous little birds (I think they are hummingbirds, but they say not) skirmishing in the wayside flowers. About a quarter way up I met a native coming down with the trunk of a cocoa palm across his shoulder; his brown breast glittering with sweat and oil: 'Talofa'—'Talofa, alii—You see that white man? He speak for you.' 'White man he gone up here?'—'Ioe' (Yes)—'Tofa, alii'—'Tofa, soifua!' I put on Jack up the steep path, till he is all as white as shaving stick—Brown's euxesis, wish I had some —past Tanugamanono, a bush village—see into the houses as I pass—they are open sheds scattered on a green—see the brown folk sitting there, suckling kids, sleeping on their stiff wooden pillows—then on through the wood path—and here I find the mysterious white man (poor devil!) with his twenty years' certificate of good behaviour as a book-keeper, frozen out by the strikes in the colonies, come up

[1] In the missionary work which is being done among the Samoans, Mr. Stevenson was especially interested. He was an observant, shrewd, yet ever generous critic of all our religious and educational organisations. His knowledge of native character and life enabled him to understand missionary difficulties, while his genial contact with all sorts and conditions of men made him keen to detect deficiencies in men and methods, and apt in useful suggestion.' The above is the testimony of the Mr. Clarke here mentioned (Rev. W. E. Clarke of the London Missionary Society). This gentleman was from the first one of the most valued friends of Mr. Stevenson and his family in Samoa, and, when the end came, read the funeral service beside his grave on Mount Vaea.

here on a chance, no work to be found, big hotel bill, no ship to leave in—and come up to beg twenty dollars because he heard I was a Scotchman, offering to leave his portmanteau in pledge. Settle this, and on again; and here my house comes in view, and a war whoop fetches my wife and Henry (or Simelé), our Samoan boy, on the front balcony; and I am home again, and only sorry that I shall have to go down again to Apia this day week. I could, and would, dwell here unmoved, but there are things to be attended to.

Never say I don't give you details and news. That is a picture of a letter.

I have been hard at work since I came; three chapters of *The Wrecker*, and since that, eight of the South Sea book, and, along and about and in between, a hatful of verses. Some day I'll send the verse to you, and you'll say if any of it is any good. I have got in a better vein with the South Sea book, as I think you will see; I think these chapters will do for the volume without much change. Those that I did in the *Janet Nicoll*, under the most ungodly circumstances, I fear will want a lot of suppling and lightening, but I hope to have your remarks in a month or two upon that point. It seems a long while since I have heard from you. I do hope you are well. I am wonderful, but tired from so much work; 'tis really immense what I have done; in the South Sea book I have fifty pages copied fair, some of which has been four times, and all twice written; certainly fifty pages of solid scriving inside a fortnight, but I was at it by seven a.m. till lunch, and from two till four or five every day; between whiles,

verse and blowing on the flageolet; never outside. If you could see this place! but I don't want any one to see it till my clearing is done, and my house built. It will be a home for angels.

So far I wrote after my bit of dinner, some cold meat and bananas, on arrival. Then out to see where Henry and some of the men were clearing the garden; for it was plain there was to be no work to-day indoors, and I must set in consequence to farmering. I stuck a good while on the way up, for the path there is largely my own handiwork, and there were a lot of sprouts and saplings and stones to be removed. Then I reached our clearing just where the streams join in one; it had a fine autumn smell of burning, the smoke blew in the woods, and the boys were pretty merry and busy. Now I had a private design—

* Point referred to in text.
..... Paths.
═══ Our boundary.

*a. Garden.* *b. Present house.*
*c. Banana patch.* *d. Waterfall.*
*e. Large waterfall into deep gorge where the heat of the fight was.*

The Vaita'e I had explored pretty far up; not yet the other stream, the Vaituliga (g=nasal n, as ng in sing); and up that, with my wood knife, I set off alone. It is here quite dry; it went through endless woods; about as broad as a Devonshire lane, here and there crossed by fallen trees; huge trees overhead in the sun, dripping lianas and tufted with orchids, tree ferns, ferns depending with air roots from the steep banks, great arums—I had not skill enough to say if any of them were the edible kind, one of our staples here!—hundreds of bananas—another staple—and alas! I had skill enough to know all of these for the bad kind that bears no fruit. My Henry moralised over this the other day; how hard it was that the bad banana flourished wild, and the good must be weeded and tended; and I had not the heart to tell him how fortunate they were here, and how hungry were other lands by comparison. The ascent of this lovely lane of my dry stream filled me with delight. I could not but be reminded of old Mayne Reid, as I have been more than once since I came to the tropics; and I thought, if Reid had been still living, I would have written to tell him that, for me, *it had come true*; and I thought, forbye, that, if the great powers go on as they are going, and the Chief Justice delays, it would come truer still; and the war-conch will sound in the hills, and my home will be inclosed in camps, before the year is ended. And all at once—mark you, how Mayne Reid is on the spot—a strange thing happened. I saw a liana stretch across the bed of the brook about breast-high, swung up my knife to sever it,

and—behold, it was a wire! On either hand it plunged into thick bush; to-morrow I shall see where it goes and get a guess perhaps of what it means. To-day I know no more than—there it is. A little higher the brook began to trickle, then to fill. At last, as I meant to do some work upon the homeward trail, it was time to turn. I did not return by the stream; knife in hand, as long as my endurance lasted, I was to cut a path in the congested bush.

At first it went ill with me; I got badly stung as high as the elbows by the stinging plant; I was nearly hung in a tough liana—a rotten trunk giving way under my feet; it was deplorable bad business. And an axe—if I dared swing one—would have been more to the purpose than my cutlass. Of a sudden things began to go strangely easier; I found stumps, bushing out again; my body began to wonder, then my mind; I raised my eyes and looked ahead; and, by George, I was no longer pioneering, I had struck an old track overgrown, and was restoring an old path. So I laboured till I was in such a state that Carolina Wilhelmina Skeggs [1] could scarce have found a name for it. Thereon desisted; returned to the stream; made my way down that stony track to the garden, where the smoke was still hanging and the sun was still in the high treetops, and so home. Here, fondly supposing my long day was over, I rubbed down; exquisite agony; water spreads the poison of these weeds; I got it all

[1] The lady in the *Vicar of Wakefield* who declares herself 'all in a muck of sweat.'

over my hands, on my chest, in my eyes, and presently, while eating an orange, *à la* Rarotonga, burned my lip and eye with orange juice. Now all day, our three small pigs had been adrift, to the mortal peril of our corn, lettuce, onions, etc., and as I stood smarting on the back verandah, behold the three piglings issuing from the wood just opposite. Instantly I got together as many boys as I could—three, and got the pigs penned against the rampart of the sty, till the others joined; whereupon we formed a cordon, closed, captured the deserters, and dropped them, squeaking amain, into their strengthened barracks where, please God, they may now stay!

Perhaps you may suppose the day now over; you are not the head of a plantation, my juvenile friend. Politics succeeded: Henry got adrift in his English, Bene was too cowardly to tell me what he was after: result, I have lost seven good labourers, and had to sit down and write to you to keep my temper. Let me sketch my lads.—Henry—Henry has gone down to town or I could not be writing to you—this were the hour of his English lesson else, when he learns what he calls 'long explessions' or 'your chief's language' for the matter of an hour and a half—Henry is a chiefling from Savaii; I once loathed, I now like and—pending fresh discoveries—have a kind of respect for Henry. He does good work for us; goes among the labourers, bossing and watching; helps Fanny, is civil, kindly, thoughtful; *O si sic semper!* But will he be 'his sometime self throughout the year'? Anyway, he has deserved of us, and he must disappoint me sharply ere I give him up.—

Bene—or Peni—Ben, in plain English—is supposed to be my ganger; the Lord love him! God made a truckling coward, there is his full history. He cannot tell me what he wants; he dares not tell me what is wrong; he dares not transmit my orders or translate my censures. And with all this, honest, sober, industrious, miserably smiling over the miserable issue of his own unmanliness.—Paul—a German—cook and steward—a glutton of work—a splendid fellow; drawbacks, three: (1) no cook; (2) an inveterate bungler; a man with twenty thumbs, continually falling in the dishes, throwing out the dinner, preserving the garbage; (3) a dr—, well, don't let us say that—but we daren't let him go to town, and he—poor, good soul—is afraid to be let go.—Lafaele (Raphael), a strong, dull, deprecatory man; splendid with an axe, if watched; the better for a rowing, when he calls me 'Papa' in the most wheedling tones; desperately afraid of ghosts, so that he dare not walk alone up in the banana patch—see map. The rest are changing labourers; and tonight, owing to the miserable cowardice of Peni, who did not venture to tell me what the men wanted—and which was no more than fair—all are gone—and my weeding in the article of being finished! Pity the sorrows of a planter.

I am, Sir, yours, and be jowned to you, The Planter,

R. L. S.

*Tuesday, 3rd.*—I begin to see the whole scheme of letter-writing; you sit down every day and pour out an equable stream of twaddle.

This morning all my fears were fled, and all the trouble had fallen to the lot of Peni himself, who deserved it; my field was full of weeders; and I am again able to justify the ways of God. All morning I worked at the *South Seas*, and finished the chapter I had stuck upon on Saturday. Fanny, awfully hove-to with rheumatics and injuries received upon the field of sport and glory, chasing pigs, was unable to go up and down stairs, so she sat upon the back verandah, and my work was chequered by her cries. 'Paul, you take a spade to do that—dig a hole first. If you do that, you'll cut your foot off! Here, you boy, what you do there? You no get work? You go find Simelé; he give you work. Peni, you tell this boy he go find Simelé; suppose Simelé no give him work, you tell him go 'way. I no want him here. That boy no good.'—*Peni* (from the distance in reassuring tones), 'All right, sir!'—*Fanny* (after a long pause, 'Peni, you tell that boy go find Simelé! I no want him stand here all day. I no pay that boy. I see him all day. He no do nothing.'—Luncheon, beef, soda-scones, fried bananas, pine-apple in claret, coffee. Try to write a poem; no go. Play the flageolet. Then sneakingly off to farmering and pioneering. Four gangs at work on our place; a lively scene; axes crashing and smoke blowing; all the knives are out. But I rob the garden party of one without a stock, and you should see my hand—cut to ribbons. Now I want to do my path up the Vaituliga single-handed, and I want it to burst on the public complete. Hence, with devilish ingenuity, I begin it at different places; so that

if you stumble on one section, you may not even then suspect the fulness of my labours. Accordingly, I started in a new place, below the wire, and hoping to work up to it. It was perhaps lucky I had so bad a cutlass, and my smarting hand bid me stay before I had got up to the wire, but just in season, so that I was only the better of my activity, not dead beat as yesterday.

A strange business it was, and infinitely solitary; away above, the sun was in the high tree-tops; the lianas noosed and sought to hang me; the saplings struggled, and came up with that sob of death that one gets to know so well; great, soft, sappy trees fell at a lick of the cutlass, little tough switches laughed at and dared my best endeavour. Soon, toiling down in that pit of verdure, I heard blows on the far side, and then laughter. I confess a chill settled on my heart. Being so dead alone, in a place where by rights none should be beyond me, I was aware, upon interrogation, if those blows had drawn nearer, I should (of course quite unaffectedly) have executed a strategic movement to the rear; and only the other day I was lamenting my insensibility to superstition! Am I beginning to be sucked in? Shall I become a midnight twitterer like my neighbours? At times I thought the blows were echoes; at times I thought the laughter was from birds. For our birds are strangely human in their calls. Vaea mountain about sundown sometimes rings with shrill cries, like the hails of merry, scattered children. As a matter of fact, I believe stealthy wood-cutters from Tanugamanono were above me

in the wood and answerable for the blows; as for the laughter, a woman and two children had come and asked Fanny's leave to go up shrimp-fishing in the burn; beyond doubt, it was these I heard. Just at the right time I returned; to wash down, change, and begin this snatch of letter before dinner was ready, and to finish it afterwards, before Henry has yet put in an appearance for his lesson in 'long explessions.'

Dinner: stewed beef and potatoes, baked bananas, new loaf-bread hot from the oven, pine-apple in claret. These are great days; we have been low in the past; but now are we as belly-gods, enjoying all things.

*Wednesday.* (*Hist. Vailima resumed.*)—A gorgeous evening of after-glow in the great tree-tops and behind the mountain, and full moon over the lowlands and the sea, inaugurated a night of horrid cold. To you effete denizens of the so-called temperate zone, it had seemed nothing; neither of us could sleep; we were up seeking extra coverings, I know not at what hour—it was as bright as day. The moon right over Vaea—near due west, the birds strangely silent, and the wood of the house tingling with cold; I believe it must have been 60°! Consequence: Fanny has a headache and is wretched, and I could do no work. (I am trying all round for a place to hold my pen; you will hear why later on; this to explain penmanship.) I wrote two pages, very bad, no movement, no life or interest; then I wrote a business letter; then took to tootling on the flageolet, till glory should call me farmering.

I took up at the fit time Lafaele and Mauga—Mauga, accent on the first, is a mountain, I don't know what Maugà means—mind what I told you of the value of g—to the garden, and set them digging, then turned my attention to the path. I could not go into my bush path for two reasons: 1st, sore hands; 2nd, had on my trousers and good shoes. Lucky it was. Right in the wild lime hedge which cuts athwart us just homeward of the garden, I found a great bed of kuikui—sensitive plant—our deadliest enemy. A fool brought it to this island in a pot, and used to lecture and sentimentalise over the tender thing. The tender thing has now taken charge of this island, and men fight it, with torn hands, for bread and life. A singular, insidious thing, shrinking and biting like a weasel; clutching by its roots as a limpet clutches to a rock. As I fought him, I bettered some verses in my poem, *The Woodman*;[1] the only thought I gave to letters. Though the kuikui was thick, there was but a small patch of it, and when I was done I attacked the wild lime, and had a hand-to-hand skirmish with its spines and elastic suckers. All this time, close by, in the cleared space of the garden, Lafaele and Maugà were digging. Suddenly quoth Lafaele, 'Somebody he sing out.'—'Somebody he sing out? All right. I go.' And I went and found they had been whistling and 'singing out' for long, but the fold of the hill and the uncleared bush shuts in the garden so that no one heard, and I was late for dinner, and Fanny's headache was cross; and when

[1] First published in the New Review, January 1895.

the meal was over, we had to cut up a pineapple which was going bad, to make jelly of; and the next time you have a handful of broken blood-blisters, apply pine-apple juice, and you will give me news of it, and I request a specimen of your hand of write five minutes after—the historic moment when I tackled this history. My day so far.

Fanny was to have rested. Blessed Paul began making a duck-house; she let him be; the duck-house fell down, and she had to set her hand to it. He was then to make a drinking-place for the pigs; she let him be again—he made a stair by which the pigs will probably escape this evening, and she was near weeping. Impossible to blame the indefatigable fellow; energy is too rare and goodwill too noble a thing to discourage; but it's trying when she wants a rest. Then she had to cook the dinner; then, of course—like a fool and a woman—must wait dinner for me, and make a flurry of herself. Her day so far. *Cetera adhuc desunt.*

*Friday—I think.*—I have been too tired to add to this chronicle, which will at any rate give you some guess of our employment. All goes well; the kuikui—(think of this mispronunciation having actually infected me to the extent of misspelling! tuitui is the word by rights)—the tuitui is all out of the paddock—a fenced park between the house and boundary; Peni's men start to-day on the road; the garden is part burned, part dug; and Henry, at the head of a troop of underpaid assistants, is hard at work clearing. The part clearing you will see from the map; from the house run down to the

stream side, up the stream nearly as high as the garden; then back to the star which I have just added to the map.

My long, silent contests in the forest have had a strange effect on me. The unconcealed vitality of these vegetables their exuberant number and strength, the attempts—I can use no other word—of lianas to enwrap and capture the intruder, the awful silence, the knowledge that all my efforts are only like the performance of an actor, the thing of a moment, and the wood will silently and swiftly heal them up with fresh effervescence; the cunning sense of the tuitui, suffering itself to be touched with wind-swayed grasses and not minding—but let the grass be moved by a man, and it shuts up; the whole silent battle, murder, and slow death of the contending forest; weigh upon the imagination. My poem the *Woodman* stands; but I have taken refuge in a new story, which just shot through me like a bullet in one of my moments of awe, alone in that tragic jungle:—

*The High Woods of Ulufanua*[1]

1. A South Sea Bridal.
2. Under the Ban.
3. Savao and Faavao.
4. Cries in the High Wood.
5. Rumour full of Tongues.
6. The Hour of Peril.
7. The Day of Vengeance.

[1] Afterwards changed into *The Beach of Falesá*.

It is very strange, very extravagant, I dare say; but it's varied, and picturesque, and has a pretty love affair, and ends well. Ulufanua is a lovely Samoan word, ulu=grove; fanua=land; grove-land—'the tops of the high trees.' Savao, 'sacred to the wood,' and Faavao, 'woodways,' are the names of two of the characters, Ulufanua the name of the supposed island.

I am very tired, and rest off to-day from all but letters. Fanny is quite done up; she could not sleep last night, something it seemed like asthma—I trust not. I suppose Lloyd will be about, so you can give him the benefit of this long scrawl.[1] Never say that I *can't* write a letter, say that I don't.—Yours ever, my dearest fellow.

R. L. S.

*Later on Friday.*—The guidwife had bread to bake, and she baked it in a pan, O! But between whiles she was down with me weeding sensitive in the paddock. The men have but now passed over it; I was round in that very place to see the weeding was done thoroughly, and already the reptile springs behind our heels. Tuitui is a truly strange beast, and gives food for thought. I am nearly sure—I cannot yet be quite, I mean to experiment, when I am less on the hot chase of the beast—that, even at the instant he shrivels up his leaves, he strikes his prickles downward so as to catch the uprooting finger; instinctive, say the gabies; but so is man's impulse to strike out. One thing that takes and

[1] Mr. Lloyd Osbourne had come to England to pack and wind up affairs at Skerryvore.

holds me is to see the strange variation in the propagation of alarm among these rooted beasts; at times it spreads to a radius (I speak by the guess of the eye) of five or six inches; at times only one individual plant appears frightened at a time. We tried how long it took one to recover; 'tis a sanguine creature; it is all abroad again before (I guess again) two minutes. It is odd how difficult in this world it is to be armed. The double armour of this plant betrays it. In a thick tuft, where the leaves disappear, I thrust in my hand, and the bite of the thorns betrays the topmost stem. In the open again, and when I hesitate if it be clover, a touch on the leaves, and its fine sense and retractile action betrays its identity at once. Yet it has one gift incomparable. Rome had virtue and knowledge; Rome perished. The sensitive plant has indigestible seeds—so they say—and it will flourish for ever. I give my advice thus to a young plant—have a strong root, a weak stem, and an indigestible seed; so you will outlast the eternal city, and your progeny will clothe mountains, and the irascible planter will blaspheme in vain. The weak point of tuitui is that its stem is strong.

*Supplementary Page.*—Here beginneth the third lesson, which is not from the planter but from a less estimable character, the writer of books.

I want you to understand about this South Sea Book. The job is immense; I stagger under material. I have seen the first big *tache*. It was necessary to see the smaller ones; the letters were at my hand for the purpose, but I was not going to lose this

experience, and, instead of writing mere letters, have poured out a lot of stuff for the book. How this works and fits, time is to show. But I believe, in time, I shall get the whole thing in form. Now, up to date, that is all my design, and I beg to warn you till we have the whole (or much) of the stuff together, you can hardly judge—and I can hardly judge. Such a mass of stuff is to be handled, if possible without repetition—so much foreign matter to be introduced—if possible with perspicuity—and, as much as can be, a spirit of narrative to be preserved. You will find that come stronger as I proceed, and get the explanations worked through. Problems of style are (as yet) dirt under my feet; my problem is architectural, creative—to get this stuff jointed and moving. If I can do that, I will trouble you for style; anybody might write it, and it would be splendid; well-engineered, the masses right, the blooming thing travelling—twig?

This I wanted you to understand, for lots of the stuff sent home is, I imagine, rot—and slovenly rot—and some of it pompous rot; and I want you to understand it's a *lay-in.*

Soon, if the tide of poeshie continues, I'll send you a whole lot to damn. You never said thank you for the handsome tribute addressed to you from Apemama;[1] such is the gratitude of the world to the God-sent poick. Well, well:—'Vex not thou the poick's mind, With thy coriaceous ingratitude, The P. will be to your faults more than a little blind,

[1] The lines beginning 'I heard the pulse of the besieging sea'; see above, p. 168.

And yours is a far from handsome attitude.' Having thus dropped into poetry in a spirit of friendship, I have the honour to subscribe myself, Sir, your obedient humble servant,

SILAS WEGG

I suppose by this you will have seen the lad—and his feet will have been in the Monument—and his eyes beheld the face of George.[1] Well!

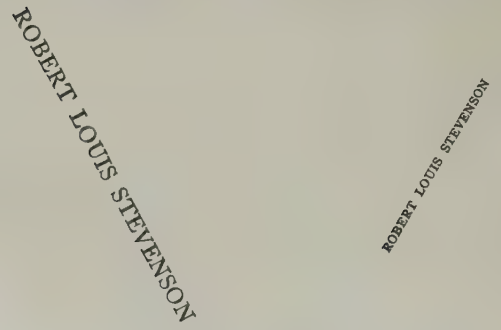
There is much eloquence in a well!

I am, Sir

Yours

The Epigrammatist

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON




FINIS—EXPLICIT

[1] 'The Monument' was his name for my house at the British Museum, and George was my old faithful servant, George Went.

## To E. L. Burlingame

The opening sentences of the following refer of course to *The Wrecker*, and particularly to a suggestion of mine concerning the relation of the main narrative to the prologue:—

*Vailima, Apia, Samoa, Nov. 7, 1890*

I WISH you to add to the words at the end of the prologue; they run, I think, thus, 'And this is the yarn of Loudon Dodd'; add, 'not as he told, but as he wrote it afterwards for his diversion.' This becomes the more needful, because, when all is done, I shall probably revert to Tai-o-hae, and give final details about the characters in the way of a conversation between Dodd and Havens. These little snippets of information and *faits-divers* have always a disjointed, broken-backed appearance; yet, readers like them. In this book we have introduced so many characters, that this kind of epilogue will be looked for; and I rather hope, looking far ahead, that I can lighten it in dialogue.

We are well past the middle now. How does it strike you? and can you guess my mystery? It will make a fattish volume!

I say, have you ever read the *Highland Widow*? I never had till yesterday: I am half inclined, bar a trip or two, to think it Scott's masterpiece; and it has the name of a failure! Strange things are readers.

I expect proofs and revises in duplicate.

We have now got into a small barrack at our place. We see the sea six hundred feet below filling the end of two vales of forest. On one hand the

mountain runs above us some thousand feet higher; great trees stand round us in our clearing; there is an endless voice of birds; I have never lived in such a heaven; just now, I have fever, which mitigates but not destroys my gusto in my circumstances.—You may envy

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

. . . O, I don't know if I mentioned that having seen your new tail to the magazine, I cried off interference, at least for this trip. Did I ask you to send me my books and papers, and all the bound volumes of the mag.? *quorum pars*. I might add that were there a good book or so—new—I don't believe there is—such would be welcome.

I desire—I positively begin to awake—to be remembered to Scribner, Low, St. Gaudens, Russell Sullivan. Well, well, you fellows have the feast of reason and the flow of soul; I have a better-looking place and climate: you should hear the birds on the hill now! The day has just wound up with a shower; it is still light without, though I write within here at the cheek of a lamp; my wife and an invaluable German are wrestling about bread on the back verandah; and how the birds and the frogs are rattling, and piping, and hailing from the woods! Here and there a throaty chuckle; here and there, cries like those of jolly children who have lost their way; here and there, the ringing sleigh-bell of the tree frog. Out and away down below me on the sea it is still raining; it will be wet under foot on schooners, and the house will leak; how well I know

that! Here the showers only patter on the iron roof, and sometimes roar; and within, the lamp burns steady on the tafa-covered walls, with their dusky tartan patterns, and the book-shelves with their thin array of books; and no squall can rout my house or bring my heart into my mouth.—The well-pleased South Sea Islander,

R. L. S.

## To Sidney Colvin

*Vailima, Tuesday, November 25th, 1890*

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I wanted to go out bright and early to go on with my survey. You never heard of that. The world has turned, and much water run under bridges, since I stopped my diary. I have written six more chapters of the book, all good I potently believe, and given up, as a deception of the devil's, the *High Woods*. I have been once down to Apia, to a huge native feast at Seumanutafa's, the chief of Apia. There was a vast mass of food, crowds of people, the police charging among them with whips, the whole in high good humour on both sides; infinite noise; and a historic event—Mr. Clarke, the missionary, and his wife, assisted at a native dance. On my return from this function, I found work had stopped; no more *South Seas* in my belly. Well, Henry had cleared a great deal of our bush on a contract, and it ought to be measured. I set myself to the task with a tape-line; it seemed a dreary business; then I borrowed a prismatic compass, and tackled the task afresh. I have no books; I had not touched an instrument nor

given a thought to the business since the year of grace 1871; you can imagine with what interest I sat down yesterday afternoon to reduce my observations; five triangles I had taken; all five came right, to my ineffable joy. Our dinner—the lowest we have ever been—consisted of *one avocado pear* between Fanny and me, a ship's biscuit for the guidman, white bread for the Missis, and red wine for the twa. No salt horse, even, in all Vailima! After dinner Henry came, and I began to teach him decimals; you wouldn't think I knew them myself after so long desuetude!

I could not but wonder how Henry stands his evenings here; the Polynesian loves gaiety—I feed him with decimals, the mariner's compass, derivations, grammar, and the like; delecting myself, after the manner of my race, *moult tristement.* I suck my paws; I live for my dexterities and by my accomplishments; even my clumsinesses are my joy—my woodcuts, my stumbling on the pipe, this surveying even—and even weeding sensitive; anything to do with the mind, with the eye, with the hand—with a part of *me*; diversion flows in these ways for the dreary man. But gaiety is what these children want; to sit in a crowd, tell stories and pass jests, to hear one another laugh and scamper with the girls. It's good fun, too, I believe, but not for R. L. S., *ætat.* 40. Which I am now past forty, Custodian, and not one penny the worse that I can see; as amusable as ever; to be on board ship is reward enough for me; give me the wages of going on——in a schooner! Only, if ever I were gay, which I

misremember, I am gay no more. And here is poor Henry passing his evenings on my intellectual husks, which the professors masticated; keeping the accounts of the estate—all wrong I have no doubt—I keep no check, beyond a very rough one; marching in with a cloudy brow, and the day-book under his arm; tackling decimals, coming with cases of conscience—how would an English chief behave in such a case? etc.; and, I am bound to say, on any glimmer of a jest, lapsing into native hilarity as a tree straightens itself after the wind is by. The other night I remembered my old friend—I believe yours also—Scholastikos, and administered the crow and the anchor—they were quite fresh to Samoan ears (this implies a very early severance)—and I thought the anchor would have made away with my Simelé altogether.

Fanny's time, in this interval, has been largely occupied in contending publicly with wild swine. We have a black sow; we call her Jack Sheppard; impossible to confine her—impossible also for her to be confined! To my sure knowledge she has been in an interesting condition for longer than any other sow in story; else she had long died the death; as soon as she is brought to bed, she shall count her days. I suppose that sow has cost us in days' labour from thirty to fifty dollars; as many as eight boys (at a dollar a day) have been twelve hours in chase of her. Now it is supposed that Fanny has outwitted her; she grins behind broad planks in what was once the cook-house. She is a wild pig; far handsomer than any tame; and when she found

the cook-house was too much for her methods of evasion, she lay down on the floor and refused food and drink for a whole Sunday. On Monday morning she relapsed, and now eats and drinks like a little man. I am reminded of an incident. Two Sundays ago, the sad word was brought that the sow was out again; this time she had carried another in her flight. Moors and I and Fanny were strolling up to the garden, and there by the waterside we saw the black sow, looking guilty. It seemed to me beyond words; but Fanny's *cri du cœur* was delicious: 'G-r-r!' she cried; 'nobody loves you!'

I would I could tell you the moving story of our cart and cart-horses; the latter are dapple-grey, about sixteen hands, and of enormous substance; the former was a kind of red and green shandrydan with a driving bench; plainly unfit to carry lumber or to face our road. (Remember that the last third of my road, about a mile, is all made out of a bridle-track by my boys—and my dollars.) It was supposed a white man had been found—an ex-German artilleryman—to drive this last; he proved incapable and drunken; the gallant Henry, who had never driven before, and knew nothing about horses—except the rats and weeds that flourish on the islands—volunteered; Moors accepted, proposing to follow and supervise: despatched his work and started after. No cart! he hurried on up the road—no cart. Transfer the scene to Vailima, where on a sudden, to Fanny and me, the cart appears, apparently at a hard gallop, some two hours before it was expected; Henry radiantly ruling chaos from the bench. It

stopped: it was long before we had time to remark that the axle was twisted like the letter L. Our first care was the horses. There they stood, black with sweat, the sweat raining from them—literally raining—their heads down, their feet apart—and blood running thick from the nostrils of the mare. We got out Fanny's under-clothes—couldn't find anything else but our blankets—to rub them down, and in about half an hour we had the blessed satisfaction to see one after the other take a bite or two of grass. But it was a toucher; a little more and these steeds would have been foundered.

*Monday, 31st* (?) *November.*—Near a week elapsed and no journal. On Monday afternoon, Moors rode up and I rode down with him, dined, and went over in the evening to the American consulate; present, Consul-General Sewall, Lieut. Parker and Mrs. Parker, Lafarge the American decorator, Adams an American historian; we talked late, and it was arranged I was to write up for Fanny, and we should both dine on the morrow.

On the Friday, I was all forenoon in the mission house, lunched at the German Consulate, went on board the *Sperber* (German war-ship) in the afternoon, called on my lawyer on my way out to American Consulate, and talked till dinner time with Adams, whom I am supplying with introductions and information for Tahiti and the Marquesas. Fanny arrived a wreck, and had to lie down. The moon rose, one day past full, and we dined in the verandah, a good dinner on the whole; talk with

Lafarge about art and the lovely dreams of art students.[1] Remark by Adams, which took me briskly home to the Monument—'I only liked one *young* woman—and that was Mrs. Procter.'[2] Henry James would like that. Back by moonlight in the consulate boat—Fanny being too tired to walk—to Moors's Saturday, I left Fanny to rest, and was off early to the Mission, where the politics are thrilling just now. The native pastors (to every one's surprise) have moved of themselves in the matter of the native dances, desiring the restrictions to be removed, or rather to be made dependent on the character of the dance. Clarke, who had feared censure and all kinds of trouble, is, of course, rejoicing greatly. A characteristic feature: the argument of the pastors was handed in in the form of a fictitious narrative of the voyage of one Mr. Pye, an English traveller, and his conversation with a chief; there are touches of satire in this educational romance. Mr. Pye, for instance, admits that he knows nothing about the Bible. At the Mission I was sought out by Henry in a devil of an agitation; he has been made the victim of a forgery—a crime hitherto unknown in Samoa. I had to go to Folau, the chief judge here,

[1] The late Mr. John Lafarge, long an honoured *doyen* among New York artists, whose record of his holiday in the South Seas, in the shape of a series of water-colour sketches of the scenery and people (with a catalogue full of interesting notes and observations), was one of the features of the Champ de Mars Salon in 1895.

[2] Mrs. B. W. Procter, the stepdaughter of Basil Montagu and widow of Barry Cornwall. The death of this spirited veteran in 1888 snapped away one of the last links with the days and memories of Keats and Coleridge. A shrewd and not too indulgent judge of character, she took R. L. S. into warm favour at first sight, and never spoke of or inquired after him but with unwonted tenderness.

in the matter. Folau had never heard of the offence, and begged to know what was the punishment; there may be lively times in forgery ahead. It seems the sort of crime to tickle a Polynesian. After lunch—you can see what a busy three days I am describing—we set off to ride home. My Jack was full of the devil of corn and too much grass, and no work. I had to ride ahead and leave Fanny behind. He is a most gallant little rascal is my Jack, and takes the whole way as hard as the rider pleases. Single incident: half-way up, I find my boys upon the road and stop and talk with Henry in his character of ganger, as long as Jack will suffer me. Fanny drones in after; we make a show of eating—or I do—she goes to bed about half-past six! I write some verses, read Irving's *Washington*, and follow about half-past eight. O, one thing more I did, in a prophetic spirit. I had made sure Fanny was not fit to be left alone, and wrote before turning in a letter to Chalmers, telling him I could not meet him in Auckland at this time. By eleven at night, Fanny got me wakened—she had tried twice in vain—and I found her very bad. Thence till three, we laboured with mustard poultices, laudanum, soda and ginger—Heavens! wasn't it cold; the land breeze was as cold as a river; the moon was glorious in the paddock, and the great boughs and the black shadows of our trees were inconceivable. But it was a poor time.

Sunday morning found Fanny, of course, a complete wreck, and myself not very brilliant. Paul had to go to Vailele *re* cocoa-nuts; it was doubtful if he could be back by dinner; never mind, said I, I'll

take dinner when you return. Off set Paul. I did an hour's work, and then tackled the house work. I did it beautiful: the house was a picture, it resplended of propriety. Presently Mr. Moors' Andrew rode up; I heard the doctor was at the Forest House and sent a note to him; and when he came, I heard my wife telling him she had been in bed all day, and that was why the house was so dirty! Was it grateful? Was it politic? Was it TRUE?—Enough! In the interval, up marched little L. S., one of my neighbours, all in his Sunday white linens; made a fine salute, and demanded the key of the kitchen in German and English. And he cooked dinner for us, like a little man, and had it on the table and the coffee ready by the hour. Paul had arranged me this surprise. Some time later, Paul returned himself with a fresh surprise on hand; he was almost sober; nothing but a hazy eye distinguished him from Paul of the week days: *vivat!*

On the evening I cannot dwell. All the horses got out of the paddock, went across, and smashed my neighbour's garden into a big hole. How little the amateur conceives a farmer's troubles. I went out at once with a lantern, staked up a gap in the hedge, was kicked at by a chestnut mare, who straightway took to the bush; and came back. A little after, they had found another gap, and the crowd were all abroad again. What has happened to our own garden nobody yet knows.

Fanny had a fair night, and we are both tolerable this morning, only the yoke of correspondence lies on me heavy. I beg you will let this go on to my

mother. I got such a good start in your letter, that I kept on at it, and I have neither time nor energy for more.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

*Something new.*—I was called from my letters by the voice of Mr. ——, who had just come up with a load of wood, roaring, 'Henry! Henry! Bring six boys!' I saw there was something wrong, and ran out. The cart, half unloaded, had upset with the mare in the shafts; she was all cramped together and all tangled up in harness and cargo, the off shaft pushing her over, the carter holding her up by main strength, and right along-side of her—where she must fall if she went down—a deadly stick of a tree like a lance. I could not but admire the wisdom and faith of this great brute; I never saw the riding-horse that would not have lost its life in such a situation; but the cart-elephant patiently waited and was saved. It was a stirring three minutes, I can tell you.

I forgot in talking of Saturday to tell of one incident which will particularly interest my mother. I met Dr. Davis from Savaii, and had an age-long talk about Edinburgh folk; it was very pleasant. He has been studying in Edinburgh, along with his son; a pretty relation. He told me he knew nobody but college people: 'I was altogether a student,' he said with glee. H seems full of cheerfulness and thick-set energy. I feel as if I could put him in a novel with effect; and ten to one, if I know more of him, the image will be only blurred.

*Tuesday, Dec. 2nd.*—I should have told you yesterday that all my boys were got up for their work

in moustaches and side-whiskers of some sort of blacking—I suppose wood-ash. It was a sight of joy to see them return at night, axe on shoulder, feigning to march like soldiers, a choragus with a loud voice singing out, 'March—step! March—step!' in imperfect recollection of some drill.

Fanny seems much revived.

R. L. S.

## To E. L. Burlingame

The intention here announced was only carried out to the extent of finishing one paper, *My First Book*, and beginning a few others —*Genesis of the Master of Ballantrae*, *Rosa Quo Locorum*, etc.; see Edinburgh edition, *Miscellanies*, vol. iv. The 'long experience of gambling places' is a phrase which must not be misunderstood. Stevenson loved risk to life and limb, but hated gambling for money, and had known the tables only as a looker-on during holiday or invalid travels as a boy and young man. 'Tamate' is the native (Rarotongan) word for trader, used especially as a name for the famous missionary pioneer, the Rev. James Chalmers, for whom Stevenson had an unbounded respect.

[*Vailima, December* 1890]

MY DEAR BURLINGAME,—By some diabolical accident, I have mislaid your last. What was in it? I know not, and here I am caught unexpectedly by the American mail, a week earlier than by computation. The computation, not the mail, is supposed to be in error. The vols. of Scribner's have arrived, and present a noble appearance in my house, which is not a noble structure at present. But by autumn we hope to be sprawling in our verandah, twelve feet, sir, by eighty-eight in front, and seventy-two on the flank; view of the sea and mountains, sunrise, moonrise, and the German fleet at anchor three miles away in Apia harbour. I hope some day to offer

you a bowl of kava there, or a slice of a pine-apple, or some lemonade from my own hedge. 'I know a hedge where the lemons grow'—*Shakespeare.* My house at this moment smells of them strong; and the rain, which a while ago roared there, now rings in minute drops upon the iron roof. I have no *Wrecker* for you this mail, other things having engaged me. I was on the whole rather relieved you did not vote for regular papers, as I feared the traces. It is my design from time to time to write a paper of a reminiscential (beastly word) description; some of them I could scarce publish from different considerations; but some of them—for instance, my long experience of gambling places—Homburg, Wiesbaden, Baden-Baden, old Monaco, and new Monte Carlo—would make good magazine padding, if I got the stuff handled the right way. I never could fathom why verse was put in magazines; it has something to do with the making-up, has it not? I am scribbling a lot just now; if you are taken badly that way, apply to the South Seas. I could send you some, I believe, anyway, only none of it is thoroughly ripe. If you have kept back the volume of ballads, I'll soon make it of a respectable size if this fit continue. By the next mail you may expect some more *Wrecker*, or I shall be displeased. Probably no more than a chapter, however, for it is a hard one, and I am denuded of my proofs, my collaborator having walked away with them to England; hence some trouble in catching the just note.

I am a mere farmer: my talk, which would scarce interest you on Broadway, is all of fuafua and tuitui

and black boys, and planting and weeding, and axes and cutlasses; my hands are covered with blisters and full of thorns; letters are, doubtless, a fine thing, so are beer and skittles, but give me farmering in the tropics for real interest. Life goes in enchantment; I come home to find I am late for dinner; and when I go to bed at night, I could cry for the weariness of my loins and thighs. Do not speak to me of vexation, the life brims with it, but with living interest fairly.

Christmas I go to Auckland, to meet Tamate, the New Guinea missionary, a man I love. The rest of my life is a prospect of much rain, much weeding and making of paths, a little letters, and devilish little to eat.—I am, my dear Burlingame, with messages to all whom it may concern, very sincerely yours,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## To Sidney Colvin

[*Vailima*] *Monday, twenty-somethingth of December* 1890

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I do not say my Jack is anything extraordinary; he is only an island horse; and the profane might call him a Punch; and his face is like a donkey's; and natives have ridden him, and he has no mouth in consequence, and occasionally shies. But his merits are equally surprising; and I don't think I should ever have known Jack's merits if I had not been riding up of late on moonless nights. Jack is a bit of a dandy; he loves to misbehave in a

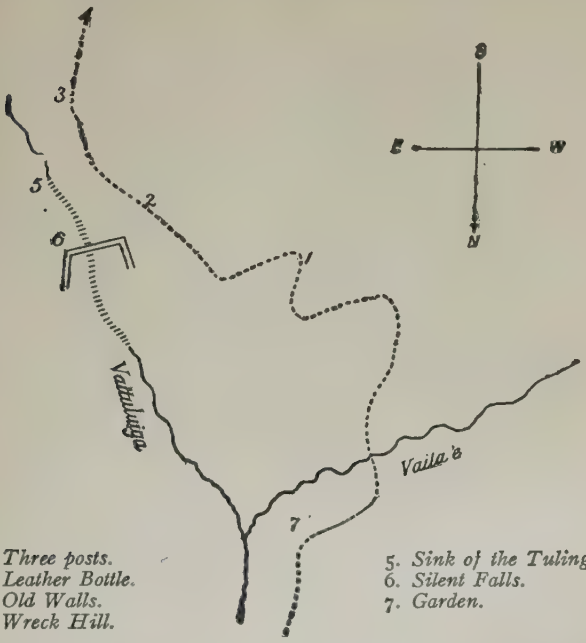
gallant manner, above all on Apia Street, and when I stop to speak to people, they say (Dr. Stuebel the German consul said about three days ago), 'O what a wild horse! it cannot be safe to ride him.' Such a remark is Jack's reward, and represents his ideal of fame. Now when I start out of Apia on a dark night, you should see my changed horse; at a fast steady walk, with his head down, and sometimes his nose to the ground when he wants to do that, he asks for his head with a little eloquent polite movement indescribable—he climbs the long ascent and threads the darkest of the wood. The first night I came it was starry; and it was singular to see the starlight drip down into the crypt of the wood, and shine in the open end of the road, as bright as moonlight at home; but the crypt itself was proof, blackness lived in it. The next night it was raining. We left the lights of Apia and passed into limbo. Jack finds a way for himself, but he does not calculate for my height above the saddle; and I am directed forward, all braced up for a crouch and holding my switch upright in front of me. It is curiously interesting. In the forest, the dead wood is phosphorescent; some nights the whole ground is strewn with it, so that it seems like a grating over a pale hell; doubtless this is one of the things that feed the night fears of the natives; and I am free to confess that in a night of trackless darkness where all else is void, these pallid *ignes suppositi* have a fantastic appearance, rather bogey even. One night, when it was very dark, a man had put out a little lantern by the wayside to show the entrance to his ground.

I saw the light, as I thought, far ahead, and supposed it was a pedestrian coming to meet me; I was quite taken by surprise when it struck in my face and passed behind me. Jack saw it, and he was appalled; do you think he thought of shying? No, sir, not in the dark; in the dark Jack knows he is on duty; and he went past that lantern steady and swift; only, as he went, he groaned and shuddered. For about 2500 of Jack's steps we only passed one house—that where the lantern was; and about 1500 of these are in the darkness of the pit, But now the moon is on tap again, and the roads lighted.

I have been exploring up the Vaituliga; see your map. It comes down a wonderful fine glen; at least 200 feet of cliffs on either hand, winding like a corkscrew, great forest trees filling it. At the top there ought to be a fine double fall; but the stream evades it by a fault and passes underground. Above the fall it runs (at this season) full and very gaily in a shallow valley, some hundred yards before the head of the glen. Its course is seen full of grasses, like a flooded meadow; that is the sink! beyond the grave of the grasses, the bed lies dry. Near this upper part there is a great show of ruinous pig-walls; a village must have stood near by.

To walk from our house to Wreck Hill (when the path is buried in fallen trees) takes one about half an hour, I think; to return, not more than twenty minutes; I dare say fifteen. Hence I should guess it was three-quarters of a mile. I had meant to join on my explorations passing eastward by the sink; but, Lord! how it rains.

*Later.*—I went out this morning with a pocket compass and walked in a varying direction, perhaps on an average S. by W., 1754 paces. Then I struck




1. *Three posts.*
2. *Leather Bottle.*
3. *Old Walls.*
4. *Wreck Hill.*
5. *Sink of the Tulinga*
6. *Silent Falls.*
7. *Garden.*

into the bush, N.W. by N., hoping to strike the Vaituliga above the falls. Now I have it plotted out I see I should have gone W. or even W. by S.; but it is not easy to guess. For 600 weary paces I struggled through the bush, and then came on the stream below the gorge, where it was comparatively easy to get down to it. In the place where I struck

it, it made cascades about a little isle, and was running about N.E., 20 to 30 feet wide, as deep as to my knee, and piercing cold. I tried to follow it down, and keep the run of its direction and my paces; but when I was wading to the knees and the waist in mud, poison brush, and rotted wood, bound hand and foot in lianas, shovelled unceremoniously off the one shore and driven to try my luck upon the other—I saw I should have hard enough work to get my body down, if my mind rested. It was a damnable walk; certainly not half a mile as the crow flies, but a real bucketer for hardship. Once I had to pass the stream where it flowed between banks about three feet high. To get the easier down, I swung myself by a wild-cocoanut—(so-called, it bears bunches of scarlet nutlets)—which grew upon the brink. As I so swung I received a crack on the head that knocked me all abroad. Impossible to guess what tree had taken a shy at me. So many towered above, one over the other, and the missile, whatever it was, dropped in the stream and was gone before I had recovered my wits. (I scarce know what I write, so hideous a Niagara of rain roars, shouts, and demonizes on the iron roof—it is pitch dark too—the lamp lit at 5!) It was a blessed thing when I struck my own road; and I got home, neat for lunch time, one of the most wonderful mud statues ever witnessed. In the afternoon I tried again, going up the other path by the garden, but was early drowned out; came home, plotted out what I had done, and then wrote this truck to you.

Fanny has been quite ill with ear-ache. She

won't go,[1] hating the sea at this wild season; I don't like to leave her; so it drones on, steamer after steamer, and I guess it'll end by no one going at all. She is in a dreadful misfortune at this hour; a case of kerosene having burst in the kitchen. A little while ago it was the carpenter's horse that trod in a nest of fourteen eggs, and made an omelette of our hopes. The farmer's lot is not a happy one. And it looks like some real uncompromising bad weather too. I wish Fanny's ear were well. Think of parties in Monuments! think of me in Skerryvore, and now of this. It don't look like a part of the same universe to me. Work is quite laid aside; I have worked myself right out.

*Christmas Eve.*—Yesterday, who could write? My wife near crazy with ear-ache; the rain descending in white crystal rods and playing hell's tattoo, like a *tutti* of battering rams, on our sheet-iron roof; the wind passing high overhead with a strange dumb mutter, or striking us full, so that all the huge trees in the paddock cried aloud, and wrung their hands, and brandished their vast arms. The horses stood in the shed like things stupid. The sea and the flagship lying on the jaws of the bay vanished in sheer rain. All day it lasted; I locked up my papers in the iron box, in case it was a hurricane, and the house might go. We went to bed with mighty uncertain feelings; far more than on shipboard, where you have only drowning ahead—whereas here you have a smash of beams, a shower of sheet iron, and a blind race in the dark and through a whirlwind

[1] On a projected expedition to Sydney.

for the shelter of an unfinished stable—and my wife with ear-ache! Well, well, this morning, we had word from Apia; a hurricane was looked for, the ships were to leave the bay by 10 A.M.; it is now 3.30, and the flagship is still a fixture, and the wind round in the blessed east, so I suppose the danger is over. But heaven is still laden; the day dim, with frequent rattling bucketfuls of rain; and just this moment (as I write) a squall went overhead, scarce striking us, with that singular, solemn noise of its passage, which is to me dreadful. I have always feared the sound of wind beyond everything. In my hell it would always blow a gale.

I have been all day correcting proofs, and making out a plan for our house. The other was too dear to be built now, and it was a hard task to make a smaller house that would suffice for the present, and not be a mere waste of money in the future. I believe I have succeeded; I have taken care of my study anyway.

Two favours I want to ask of you. First, I wish you to get *Pioneering in New Guinea*, by J. Chalmers. It's a missionary book, and has less pretensions to be literature than Spurgeon's sermons. Yet I think even through that, you will see some of the traits of the hero that wrote it; a man that took me fairly by storm for the most attractive, simple, brave, and interesting man in the whole Pacific. He is away now to go up the Fly River; a desperate venture, it is thought; he is quite a Livingstone card.

Second, try and keep yourself free next winter; and if my means can be stretched so far, I'll come to

Egypt and we'll meet at Shepheard's Hotel, and you'll put me in my place, which I stand in need of badly by this time. Lord, what bully times! I suppose I'll come per British Asia, or whatever you call it, and avoid all cold, and might be in Egypt about November as ever was—eleven months from now or rather less. But do not let us count our chickens.

Last night three piglings were stolen from one of our pig-pens. The great Lafaele appeared to my wife uneasy, so she engaged him in conversation on the subject, and played upon him the following engaging trick. You advance your two forefingers towards the sitter's eyes; he closes them, whereupon you substitute (on his eyelids) the fore and middle fingers of the left hand; and with your right (which he supposes engaged) you tap him on the head and back. When you let him open his eyes, he sees you withdrawing the two forefingers. 'What that?' asked Lafaele. 'My devil,' says Fanny. 'I wake um, my devil. All right now. He go catch the man that catch my pig.' About an hour afterwards, Lafaele came for further particulars. 'O, all right,' my wife says. 'By and by, that man he sleep, devil go sleep same place. By and by, that man plenty sick. I no care. What for he take my pig?' Lafaele cares plenty; I don't think he is the man, though he may be; but he knows him, and most likely will eat some of that pig to-night. He will not eat with relish.

*Saturday, 27th.*—It cleared up suddenly after dinner, and my wife and I saddled up and off to Apia,

whence we did not return till yesterday morning. Christmas Day I wish you could have seen our party at table. H. J. Moors at one end mith my wife, I at the other with Mrs. M., between us two native women, Carruthers the lawyer, Moors's two shop-boys—Walters and A. M. the quadroon—and the guests of the evening, Shirley Baker, the defamed and much-accused man of Tonga, and his son, with the artificial joint to his arm—where the assassins shot him in shooting at his father. Baker's appearance is not unlike John Bull on a cartoon; he is highly interesting to speak to, as I had expected; I found he and I had many common interests, and were engaged in puzzling over many of the same difficulties. After dinner it was quite pretty to see our Christmas party, it was so easily pleased and prettily behaved. In the morning I should say I had been to lunch at the German consulate, where I had as usual a very pleasant time. I shall miss Dr. Stuebel[1] much when he leaves, and when Adams and Lafarge go also, it will be a great blow. I am getting spoiled with all this good society.

On Friday morning, I had to be at my house affairs before seven; and they kept me in Apia till past ten, disputing, and consulting about brick and stone and native and hydraulic lime, and cement and sand, and all sorts of otiose details about the chimney—just what I fled from in my father's office twenty years ago; I should have made a languid engineer. Rode up with the carpenter. Ah, my wicked Jack! on

[1] See *A Footnote to History* for more in praise of Dr. Stuebel, and of his exceptional deserts among white officials in Samoa.

Christmas Eve, as I was taking the saddle bag off, he kicked at me, and fetched me too, right on the shin. On Friday, being annoyed at the carpenter's horse having a longer trot, he uttered a shrill cry and tried to bite him! Alas, alas, these are like old days; my dear Jack is a Bogue,[1] but I cannot strangle Jack into submission.

I have given up the big house for just now; we go ahead right away with a small one, which should be ready in two months, and I suppose will suffice for just now.

O I know I haven't told you about our *aitu*, have I? It is a lady, *aitu fafine*: she lives on the mountain-side; her presence is heralded by the sound of a gust of wind; a sound very common in the high woods; when she catches you, I do not know what happens; but in practice she is avoided, so I suppose she does more than pass the time of day. The great *aitu Saumai-afe* was once a living woman, and became an *aitu*, no one understands how; she lives in a stream at the well-head, her hair is red, she appears as a lovely young lady, her bust particularly admired, to handsome young men; these die, her love being fatal;—as a handsome youth she had been known to court damsels with the like result, but this is very rare; as an old crone she goes about and asks for water, and woe to them who are uncivil! *Saumai-afe* means literally, 'Come here a thousand!' A good name for a lady of her manners. My *aitu*

[1] One of the many aliases of the wicked Skye-terrier of Hyères, Davos, and Bournemouth days, celebrated in the essay *On the Character of Dogs*.

*fafine* does not seem to be in the same line of business. It is unsafe to be a handsome youth in Samoa; a young man died from her favours last month—so we said on this side of the island; on the other, where he died, it was not so certain. I, for one, blame it on Madam *Saumai-afe* without hesitation.

Example of the farmer's sorrows. I slipped out on the balcony a moment ago. It is a lovely morning, cloudless, smoking hot, the breeze not yet arisen. Looking west, in front of our new house, I saw two heads of Indian corn wagging, and the rest and all nature stock still. As I looked, one of the stalks subsided and disappeared. I dashed out to the rescue; two small pigs were deep in the grass—quite hid till within a few yards—gently but swiftly demolishing my harvest. Never be a farmer.

12.30 *p.m.*—I while away the moments of digestion by drawing you a faithful picture of my morning. When I had done writing as above it was time to clean our house. When I am working, it falls on my wife alone, but to-day we had it between us; she did the bedroom, I the sitting-room, in fifty-seven minutes of really most unpalatable labour. Then I changed every stitch, for I was wet through, and sat down and played on my pipe till dinner was ready, mighty pleased to be in a mildly habitable spot once more. The house had been neglected for near a week, and was a hideous spot; my wife's ear and our visit to Apia being the causes: our Paul we prefer not to see upon that theatre, and God knows he has plenty to do elsewhere.

I am glad to look out of my back door and see the boys smoothing the foundations of the new house; this is all very jolly, but six months of it has satisfied me; we have too many things for such close quarters; to work in the midst of all the myriad misfortunes of the planter's life, seated in a Dyonisius' (can't spell him) ear, whence I catch every complaint, mishap and contention, is besides the devil; and the hope of a cave of my own inspires me with lust. O to be able to shut my own door and make my own confusion! O to have the brown paper and the matches and 'make a hell of my own' once more!

I do not bother you with all my troubles in these outpourings; the troubles of the farmer are inspiriting—they are like difficulties out hunting—a fellow rages at the time and rejoices to recall and to commemorate them. My troubles have been financial. It is hard to arrange wisely interests so distributed. America, England, Samoa, Sydney, everywhere I have an end of liability hanging out and some shelf of credit hard by; and to juggle all these and build a dwelling-place here, and check expense—a thing I am ill fitted for—you can conceive what a nightmare it is at times. Then God knows I have not been idle. But since *The Master* nothing has come to raise any coins. I believe the springs are dry at home, and now I am worked out, and can no more at all. A holiday is required.

*Dec. 28th.*—I have got unexpectedly to work again, and feel quite dandy. Good-bye.

R. L. S.

## To Henry James

Mr. Lafarge the artist and Mr. Henry Adams the historian, have been mentioned already. The pinch in the matter of eatables only lasted for a little while, until Mrs. Stevenson had taken her bearings and made her arrangements in the matter of marketing, etc.

*Vailima, Apia, Samoa, December 29th,* 1890

MY DEAR HENRY JAMES,—It is terrible how little everybody writes, and how much of that little disappears in the capacious maw of the Post Office. Many letters, both from and to me, I now know to have been lost in transit: my eye is on the Sydney Post Office, a large ungainly structure with a tower, as being not a hundred miles from the scene of disappearance; but then I have no proof. The *Tragic Muse* you announced to me as coming; I had already ordered it from a Sydney book-seller: about two months ago he advised me that his copy was in the post; and I am still tragically museless.

News, news, news. What do we know of yours? What do you care for ours? We are in the midst of the rainy season, and dwell among alarms of hurricanes, in a very unsafe little two-storied wooden box 650 feet above and about three miles from the sea-beach. Behind us, till the other slope of the island, desert forest, peaks, and loud torrents; in front green slopes to the sea, some fifty miles of which we dominate. We see the ships as they go out and in to the dangerous roadstead of Apia; and if they lie far out, we can even see their topmasts while they are at anchor. Of sounds of men, beyond those of our own labourers, there reach us, at very long intervals, salutes from the warships in harbour, the

bell of the cathedral church, and the low of the conch-shell calling the labour boys on the German plantations. Yesterday, which was Sunday—*the quantième* is most likely erroneous; you can now correct it—we had a visitor—Baker of Tonga. Heard you ever of him? He is a great man here: he is accused of theft, rape, judicial murder, private poisoning, abortion, misappropriation of public moneys—oddly enough, not forgery, nor arson: you would be amused if you knew how thick the accusations fly in this South Sea world. I make no doubt my own character is something illustrious; or if not yet there is a good time coming.

But all our resources have not of late been Pacific. We have had enlightened society: Lafarge the painter, and your friend Henry Adams: a great privilege—would it might endure. I would go oftener to see them, but the place is awkward to reach on horseback. I had to swim my horse the last time I went to dinner; and as I have not yet returned the clothes I had to borrow, I dare not return in the same plight: it seems inevitable—as soon as the wash comes in, I plump straight into the American consul's shirt or trousers! They, I believe, would come oftener to see me but for the horrid doubt that weighs upon our commissariat department; we have *often* almost nothing to eat; a guest would simply break the bank; my wife and I have dined on one avocado pear; I have several times dined on hard bread and onions. What would you do with a guest at such narrow seasons?—eat him? or serve up a labour boy fricasseed?

Work? work is now arrested, but I have written, I should think, about thirty chapters of the South Sea book; they will all want rehandling, I dare say. Gracious, what a strain is a long book! The time it took me to design this volume, before I could dream of putting pen to paper, was excessive; and then think of writing a book of travels on the spot, when I am continually extending my information, revising my opinions, and seeing the most finely finished portions of my work come part by part in pieces. Very soon I shall have no opinions left. And without an opinion, how to string artistically vast accumulations of fact? Darwin said no one could observe without a theory; I suppose he was right; 'tis a fine point of metaphysic; but I will take my oath, no man can write without one—at least the way he would like to, and my theories melt, melt, melt, and as they melt the thaw-waters wash down my writing, and leave unideal tracts—wastes instead of cultivated farms.

Kipling is by far the most promising young man who has appeared since—ahem—I appeared. He amazes me by his precocity and various endowment. But he alarms me by his copiousness and haste. He should shield his fire with both hands 'and draw up all his strength and sweetness in one ball.' ('Draw all his strength and all His sweetness up into one ball'? I cannot remember Marvell's words.) So the critics have been saying to me; but I was never capable of—and surely never guilty of—such a debauch of production. At this rate his works will soon fill the habitable globe; and surely he was

armed for better conflicts than these succinct sketches and flying leaves of verse? I look on, I admire, I rejoice for myself; but in a kind of ambition we all have for our tongue and literature I am wounded. If I had this man's fertility and courage, it seems to me I could heave a pyramid.

Well, we begin to be old fogies now; and it was high time *something* rose to take our places. Certainly Kipling has the gifts; the fairy godmothers were all tipsy at his christening: what will he do with them?

Good-bye, my dear James; find an hour to write to us, and register your letter.—Yours affectionately,

R. L. S.

## To Rudyard Kipling

In 1890, on first becoming acquainted with Mr. Kipling's *Soldiers Three*, Stevenson had written off his congratulations red-hot. 'Well and indeed, Mr. Mulvaney,' so ran the first sentences of his note, 'but it's as good as meat to meet in with you, sir. They tell me it was a man of the name of Kipling made ye; but indeed and they can't fool me; it was the Lord God Almighty that made you.' Taking the cue thus offered, Mr. Kipling had written back in the character of his own Irishman, Terence Mulvaney, addressing Stevenson's Highlander, Alan Breck Stewart. In the following letter, which belongs to an uncertain date in 1891, Alan Breck is made to reply. 'The gentleman I now serve with' means, of course, R. L. S. himself.

[*Vailima*, 1891]

SIR,—I cannot call to mind having written you, but I am so throng with occupation this may have fallen aside. I never heard tell I had any friends in Ireland, and I am led to understand you are come of no considerable family. The gentleman I now serve with assures me, however, you are a very pretty fellow and your letter deserves to be remarked. It's true he is himself a man of a very low descent upon

the one side; though upon the other he counts cousinship with a gentleman, my very good friend the late Mr. Balfour of the Shaws, in the Lothian, which I should be wanting in good fellowship to forget. He tells me besides you are a man of your hands; I am not informed of your weapon; but if all be true it sticks in my mind I would be ready to make exception in your favour, and meet you like one gentleman with another. I suppose this'll be your purpose in your favour, which I could very ill make out; it's one I would be sweir to baulk you of. It seems, Mr. McIlvaine, which I take to be your name, you are in the household of a gentleman of the name of Coupling: for whom my friend is very much engaged. The distances being very uncommodious, I think it will be maybe better if we leave it to these two to settle all that's necessary to honour. I would have you to take heed it's a very unusual condescension on my part, that bear a King's name; and for the matter of that I think shame to be mingled with a person of the name of Coupling, which is doubtless a very good house but one I never heard tell of, any more than Stevenson. But your purpose being laudable, I would be sorry (as the word goes) to cut off my nose to spite my face. —I am, Sir, your humble servant,

A. Stewart,
*Chevalier de St. Louis*

*To Mr. M'Ilvaine,*
*Gentleman Private in a foot regiment,*
*under cover to Mr. Coupling.*

He has read me some of your Barrack Room Ballants, which are not of so noble a strain as some

of mine in the Gaelic, but I could set some of them to the pipes if this rencounter goes as it's to be desired. Let's first, as I understand you to move, do each other this rational courtesy; and if either will survive, we may grow better acquaint. For your tastes for what's martial and for poetry agree with mine.

A. S.

## To Sidney Colvin

This is the first appearance in Stevenson's letters of the Swedish Chief Justice of Samoa, Mr. Conrad Cedarcrantz, of whom we shall hear enough and more than enough in the sequel.

*S.S.* Lübeck, *between Apia and Sydney, Jan. 17th*, 1891

MY DEAR COLVIN,—The Faamasino Sili, or Chief Justice, to speak your low language, has arrived. I had ridden down with Henry and Lafaele; the sun was down, the night was close at hand, so we rode fast; just as I came to the corner of the road before Apia, I heard a gun fire; and lo, there was a great crowd at the end of the pier, and the troops out, and a chief or two in the height of Samoa finery, and Seumanu coming in his boat (the oarsmen all in uniform), bringing the Faamasino Sili sure enough. It was lucky he was no longer; the natives would not have waited many weeks. But think of it, as I sat in the saddle at the outside of the crowd (looking, the English consul said, as if I were commanding the manœuvres), I was nearly knocked down by a stampede of the three consuls; they had been waiting their guest at the Matafele end, and some wretched intrigue among the whites had brought

him to Apia, and the consuls had to run all the length of the town and come too late.

The next day was a long one; I was at a marriage of Gurr the banker to Fanua, the virgin of Apia. Bride and bridesmaids were all in the old high dress; the ladies were all native; the men, with the exception of Seumanu, all white.

It was quite a pleasant party, and while we were writing, we had a bird's-eye view of the public reception of the Chief Justice. The best part of it were some natives in war array; with blacked faces, turbans, tapa kilts, and guns, they looked very manly and purposelike. No, the best part was poor old drunken Joe, the Portuguese boatman, who seemed to think himself specially charged with the reception, and ended by falling on his knees before the Chief Justice on the end of the pier and in full view of the whole town and bay. The natives pelted him with rotten bananas; how the Chief Justice took it I was too far off to see; but it was highly absurd.

I have commemorated my genial hopes for the regimen of the Faamasino Sili in the following canine verses, which, if you at all guess how to read them, are very pretty in movement, and (unless he be a mighty good man) too true in sense.

We're quarrelling, the villages, we've beaten the
wooden drums,
Sa femisai o nu'u, sa taia o pate,
Is confounded thereby the justice,
Ua atuatuvale a le faamasino e,
The chief justice, the terrified justice,

Le faamasino sili, le faamasino se,
Is on the point of running away the justice,
O le a solasola le faamasino e,
The justice denied any influence, the terrified justice,
O le faamasino le ai, a, le faamasino se,
O le a solasola le faamasino e.

Well, after this excursion into tongues that have never been alive—though I assure you we have one capital book in the language, a book of fables by an old missionary of the unpromising name of Pratt, which is simply the best and the most literary version of the fables known to me. I suppose I should except La Fontaine, but L. F. takes a long time; these are brief as the books of our childhood, and full of wit and literary colour; and O, Colvin, what a tongue it would be to write, if one only knew it—and there were only readers. Its curse in common use is an incredible left-handed wordiness; but in the hands of a man like Pratt it is succinct as Latin, compact of long rolling polysyllables and little and often pithy particles, and for beauty of sound a dream. Listen, I quote from Pratt—this is good Samoan, not canine—

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | | 4 | 1 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| O le afa, | ua | taalili | ai | le ulu vao, | ua | pa mai | le faititili. |

1 almost *wa*, 2 the two *a's* just distinguished, 3 the *ai* is practically suffixed to the verb, 4 almost *vow*. The excursion has prolonged itself.

I started by the *Lübeck* to meet Lloyd and my mother; there were many reasons for and against; the main reason against was the leaving of Fanny alone in her blessed cabin, which has been somewhat remedied by my carter, Mr. ——, putting up in the stable and messing with her; but perhaps desire of change decided me not well, though I do think I ought to see an oculist, being very blind indeed, and sometimes unable to read. Anyway I left, the only cabin passenger, four and a kid in the second cabin, and a dear voyage it had like to have proved. Close to Fiji (choose a worse place on the map) we broke our shaft early one morning; and when or where we might expect to fetch land or meet with any ship, I would like you to tell me. The Pacific is absolutely desert. I have sailed there now some years; and scarce ever seen a ship except in port or close by; I think twice. It was the hurricane season besides, and hurricane waters. Well, our chief engineer got the shaft—it was the middle crank shaft—mended; thrice it was mended, and twice broke down; but now keeps up—only we dare not stop, for it is almost impossible to start again. The captain in the meanwhile crowded her with sail; fifteen sails in all, every stay being gratified with a stay-sail, a boat-boom sent aloft for a maintop-gallant yard, and the derrick of a crane brought in service as bowsprit. All the time we have had a fine, fair wind and a smooth sea; to-day at noon our run was 203 miles (if you please!), and we are within some 360 miles of Sydney. Probably there has never been a more gallant success; and I can say

honestly it was well worked for. No flurry, no high words, no long faces; only hard work and honest thought; a pleasant, manly business to be present at. All the chances were we might have been six weeks—ay, or three months at sea—or never turned up at all, and now it looks as though we should reach our destination some five days too late.

### To Marcel Schwob

*Sydney, January 19th, 1891*

MY DEAR SIR,—*Sapristi, comme vous y allez!* Richard III. and Dumas, with all my heart: but not Hamlet. Hamlet is great literature; Richard III. a big, black, gross, sprawling melodrama, writ with infinite spirit but with no refinement or philosophy by a man who had the world, himself, mankind, and his trade still to learn. I prefer the Vicomte de Bragelonne to Richard III.; it is better done of its kind: I simply do not mention the Vicomte in the same part of the building with Hamlet, or Lear, or Othello, or any of those masterpieces that Shakespeare survived to give us.

Also, *comme vous y allez* in my commendation! I fear my *solide éducation classique* had best be described, like Shakespeare's, as 'little Latin and no Greek' and I was educated, let me inform you, for an engineer. I shall tell my bookseller to send you a copy of *Memories and Portraits*, where you will see something of my descent and education, as it was, and hear me at length on my dear Vicomte. I give you permission gladly to take your choice out of my

works, and translate what you shall prefer, too much honoured that so clever a young man should think it worth the pains. My own choice would lie between *Kidnapped* and the *Master of Ballantrae*. Should you choose the latter, pray do not let Mrs. Henry thrust the sword up to the hilt in the frozen ground—one of my inconceivable blunders, an exaggeration to stagger Hugo. Say 'she sought to thrust it in the ground.' In both these works you should be prepared for Scotticisms used deliberately.

I fear my stepson will not have found time to get to Paris; he was overwhelmed with occupation, and is already on his voyage back. We live here in a beautiful land, amid a beautiful and interesting people. The life is still very hard: my wife and I live in a two-roomed cottage, about three miles and six hundred and fifty feet above the sea; we have had to make the road to it; our supplies are very imperfect; in the wild weather of this (the hurricane) season we have much discomfort: one night the wind blew in our house so outrageously that we must sit in the dark; and as the sound of the rain on the roof made speech inaudible, you may imagine we found the evening long. All these things, however, are pleasant to me. You say *l'artiste inconscient* set off to travel: you do not divide me right. 0·6 of me is artist; 0·4, adventurer. First, I suppose, come letters; then adventure; and since I have indulged the second part, I think the formula begins to change: 0·55 of an artist, 0·45 of the adventurer were nearer true. And if it had not been for my small strength, I might have been a different man in all things.

Whatever you do, do not neglect to send me what you publish on Villon: I look forward to that with lively interest. I have no photograph at hand, but I will send one when I can. It would be kind if you would do the like, for I do not see much chance of our meeting in the flesh: and a name, and a handwriting, and an address, and even a style? I know about as much of Tacitus, and more of Horace; it is not enough between contemporaries, such as we still are. I have just remembered another of my books, which I re-read the other day, and thought in places good—*Prince Otto*. It is not as good as either of the others; but it has one recommendation—it has female parts, so it might perhaps please better in France.

I will ask Chatto to send you, then—*Prince Otto*, *Memories and Portraits*, *Underwoods*, and *Ballads*, none of which you seem to have seen. They will be too late for the New Year: let them be an Easter present.

You must translate me soon; you will soon have better to do than to transvase the work of others.—Yours very truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON,
With the worst pen in the South Pacific

## TO CHARLES BAXTER

Stevenson had been indignant at the neglect of an old friend at Edinburgh, who had received kindness from his mother, to call on her after her return from her wanderings in the Pacific.

*S.S.* Lübeck, *at sea [on the return voyage from Sydney, February* 1891]

MY DEAR CHARLES,—Perhaps in my old days I do grow irascible; 'the old man virulent' has long

been my pet name for myself. Well, the temper is at least all gone now; time is good at lowering these distemperatures; far better is a sharp sickness, and I am just (and scarce) afoot again after a smoking hot little malady at Sydney. And the temper being gone, I still think the same. . . . We have not our parents for ever; we are never very good to them; when they go and we have lost our front-file man we begin to feel all our neglects mighty sensibly. I propose a proposal. My mother is here on board with me; to-day for once I mean to make her as happy as I am able, and to do that which I know she likes. You, on the other hand, go and see your father, and do ditto, and give him a real good hour or two. We shall both be glad hereafter.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

## To Sidney Colvin

Stevenson had been sharply ailing as usual at Sydney, and was now on his way back. Having received proofs of some of his *South Sea* chapters, he had begun to realise that they were not what he had hoped to make them.

[*On Board Ship between Sydney and Apia, February* 1891]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—The *Janet Nicoll* stuff was rather worse than I had looked for; you have picked out all that is fit to stand, bar two others (which I don't dislike)—the Port of Entry and the House of Temoana; that is for a present opinion; I may condemn these also ere I have done. By this time you should have another Marquesan letter, the worst of the lot, I think; and seven Paumotu letters, which

are not far out of the vein, as I wish it; I am in hopes the Hawaiian stuff is better yet: time will show, and time will make perfect. Is something of this sort practicable for the dedication?

TERRA MARIQUE
PER PERICULA PER ARDUA
AMICAE COMITI
D.D.
AMANS VIATOR

'Tis a first shot concocted this morning in my berth: I had always before been trying it in English, which insisted on being either insignificant or fulsome: I cannot think of a better word than *comes*, there being not the shadow of a Latin book on board; yet sure there is some other. Then *viator* (though it *sounds* all right) is doubtful; it has too much, perhaps, the sense of wayfarer? Last, will it mark sufficiently that I mean my wife? And first, how about blunders? I scarce wish it longer.

Have had a swingeing sharp attack in Sydney; beating the fields[1] for two nights, Saturday and Sunday. Wednesday was brought on board, *tel quel*, a wonderful wreck; and now, Wednesday week, am a good deal picked up, but yet not quite a Samson, being still groggy afoot and vague in the head. My chess, for instance, which is usually a pretty strong game, and defies all rivalry aboard, is vacillating, devoid of resource and observation, and hitherto not covered with customary laurels. As for

[1] *Battre les champs*, to wander in mind.

work, it is impossible. We shall be in the saddle before long, no doubt, and the pen once more couched. You must not expect a letter under these circumstances, but be very thankful for a note. Once at Samoa, I shall try to resume my late excellent habits, and delight you with journals, you unaccustomed, I unaccustomed; but it is never too late to mend.

It is vastly annoying that I cannot go even to Sydney without an attack; and heaven knows my life was anodyne. I only once dined with anybody; at the club with Wise; worked all morning—a terrible dead pull; a month only produced the imperfect embryos of two chapters; lunched in the boarding-house, played on my pipe; went out and did some of my messages; dined at a French restaurant, and returned to play draughts, whist, or Van John with my family. This makes a cheery life after Samoa; but it isn't what you call burning the candle at both ends, is it? (It appears to me not one word of this letter will be legible by the time I am done with it, this dreadful ink rubs off.) I have a strange kind of novel under construction; it begins about 1660 and ends 1830, or perhaps I may continue it to 1875 or so, with another life. One, two, three, four, five, six generations, perhaps seven, figure, therein; two of my old stories, 'Delafield' and 'Shovel,' are incorporated; it is to be told in the third person, with some of the brevity of history, some of the detail of romance. *The Shovels of Newton French* will be the name. The idea is an old one; it was brought to birth by an accident;

a friend in the islands who picked up F. Jenkin,[1] read a part, and said: 'Do you know, that's a strange book? I like it; I don't believe the public will; but I like it.' He thought it was a novel! 'Very well,' said I, 'we'll see whether the public will like it or not; they shall have the chance.'—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

## To H. B. Baildon

The late Mr. H. Bellyse Baildon, for some time Lecturer on English Literature at the University of Vienna and afterwards at Dundee College, had been an old schoolmate and fellow-aspirant in literature with Stevenson at Edinburgh. 'Chalmers,' of course, is the Rev. James Chalmers of Rarotonga and New Guinea already referred to above, the admirable missionary, explorer, and administrator, whom Stevenson sometimes expressed a desire to survive, for the sake only of writing his life.

*Vailima, Upolu* [*Spring* 1881]

MY DEAR BAILDON,—This is a real disappointment. It was so long since we had met, I was anxious to see where time had carried and stranded us. Last time we saw each other—it must have been all ten years ago, as we were new to the thirties—it was only for a moment, and now we're in the forties, and before very long we shall be in our graves. Sick and well, I have had a splendid life of it, grudge

[1] *Memoir of Fleeming Jenkin*, by R. L. S., prefixed to *Papers Literary, Scientific, etc., by the late Fleeming Jenkin, F.R.S., LL.D.*; 2 vols. London, Longmans, 1887. The first chapters consist of a genealogical history of the family. This, to my mind one of the best works of R. L. S., has not yet been reprinted except in the Edinburgh and Pentland editions. Of *Delafield* I never heard; the plan of *Shovel*, which was to be in great part a story of the Peninsular War, had been sketched out and a few chapters written as long ago as the seventies.

nothing, regret very little—and then only some little corners of misconduct for which I deserve hanging, and must infallibly be damned—and, take it all over, damnation and all, would hardly change with any man of my time, unless perhaps it were Gordon or our friend Chalmers: a man I admire for his virtues, love for his faults, and envy for the really A1 life he has, with everything heart—my heart, I mean—could wish. It is curious to think you will read this in the grey metropolis; go the first grey, east-windy day into the Caledonian Station, if it looks at all as it did of yore: I met Satan there. And then go and stand by the cross, and remember the other one—him that went down—my brother, Robert Fergusson. It is a pity you had not made me out, and seen me as patriarch and planter. I shall look forward to some record of your time with Chalmers: you can't weary me of that fellow, he is as big as a house and far bigger than any church, where no man warms his hands. Do you know anything of Thomson? Of A——, B——, C——, D——, E——, F——, at all? As I write C.'s name mustard rises in my nose; I have never forgiven that weak, amiable boy a little trick he played me when I could ill afford it: I mean that whenever I think of it, some of the old wrath kindles, not that I would hurt the poor soul, if I got the world with it. And Old X——? Is he still afloat? Harmless bark! I gather you ain't married yet, since your sister, to whom I ask to be remembered, goes with you. Did you see a silly tale, *John Nicholson's Predicament*,[1]

[1] *The Misadventures of John Nicholson.*

or some such name, in which I made free with your home at Murrayfield? There is precious little sense in it, but it might amuse. Cassell's published it in a thing called *Yule-Tide* years ago, and nobody that ever I heard of read or has ever seen *Yule-Tide*. It is addressed to a class we never met—readers of Cassell's series and that class of conscientious chaff, and my tale was dull, though I don't recall that it was conscientious. Only, there's the house at Murrayfield and a dead body in it. Glad the *Ballads* amused you. They failed to entertain a coy public, at which I wondered; not that I set much account by my verses, which are the verses of Prosator; but I do know how to tell a yarn, and two of the yarns are great. *Rahero* is for its length a perfect folk-tale: savage and yet fine, full of tailforemost morality, ancient as the granite rocks; if the historian, not to say the politician, could get that yarn into his head, he would have learned some of his A B C. But the average man at home cannot understand antiquity; he is sunk over the ears in Roman civilisation; and a tale like that of *Rahero* falls on his ears inarticulate. The Spectator said there was no psychology in it; that interested me much: my grandmother (as I used to call that able paper, and an able paper it is, and a fair one) cannot so much as observe the existence of savage psychology when it is put before it. I am at bottom a psychologist and ashamed of it; the tale seized me one-third because of its picturesque features, two-thirds because of its astonishing psychology, and the Spectator says there's none. I am going on with a lot of island

work, exulting in the knowledge of a new world, 'a new created world' and new men; and I am sure my income will DECLINE and FALL off; for the effort of comprehension is death to the intelligent public, and sickness to the dull.

I do not know why I pester you with all this trash, above all as you deserve nothing. I give you my warm *talofa* ('my love to you,' Samoan salutation). Write me again when the spirit moves you. And some day, if I still live, make out the trip again and let us hob-a-nob with our grey pows on my verandah.—Yours sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## To SIDNEY COLVIN

The latter part of this letter was written in the course of an expedition on which Stevenson had been invited by the American Consul, Mr. Sewall, to the neighbouring island of Tutuila. Unluckily the letter breaks off short, and the only record of this trip occurs in the diary partly quoted in Mr. Balfour's *Life*, ch. xiv.

*Vailima, Friday, March 19th*

MY DEAR S. C.,—You probably expect that now I am back at Vailima I shall resume the practice of the diary letter. A good deal is changed. We are more; solitude does not attend me as before; the night is passed playing Van John for shells; and, what is not less important, I have just recovered from a severe illness, and am easily tired.

I will give you to-day. I sleep now in one of the lower rooms of the new house, where my wife has recently joined me. We have two beds, an empty

case for a table, a chair, a tin basin, a bucket and a jug; next door in the dining-room, the carpenters camp on the floor, which is covered with their mosquito nets. Before the sun rises, at 5.45 or 5.50, Paul brings me tea, bread, and a couple of eggs; and by about six I am at work. I work in bed—my bed is of mats, no mattress, sheets, or filth—mats, a pillow, and a blanket—and put in some three hours. It was 9.5 this morning when I set off to the stream-side to my weeding; where I toiled, manuring the ground with the best enricher, human sweat, till the conch-shell was blown from our verandah at 10.30. At eleven we dine; about half-past twelve I tried (by exception) to work again, could make nothing on't, and by one was on my way to the weeding, where I wrought till three. Half-past five is our next meal, and I read Flaubert's Letters till the hour came round; dined, and then, Fanny having a cold, and I being tired, came over to my den in the unfinished house, where I now write to you, to the tune of the carpenters' voices, and by the light—I crave your pardon—by the twilight of three vile candles filtered through the medium of my mosquito bar. Bad ink being of the party, I write quite blindfold, and can only hope you may be granted to read that which I am unable to see while writing.

I said I was tired; it is a mild phrase; my back aches like toothache; when I shut my eyes to sleep, I know I shall see before them a phenomenon to which both Fanny and I are quite accustomed—endless vivid deeps of grass and weed, each plant

particular and distinct, so that I shall lie inert in body, and transact for hours the mental part of my day business, choosing the noxious from the useful. And in my dreams I shall be hauling on recalcitrants and suffering stings from nettles, stabs from citron thorns, fiery bites from ants, sickening resistances of mud and slime, evasions of slimy roots, dead weight of heat, sudden puffs of air, sudden starts from bird-calls in the contiguous forest—some mimicking my name, some laughter, some the signal of a whistle, and living over again at large the business of my day.

Though I write so little, I pass all my hours of field-work in continual converse and imaginary correspondence. I scarce pull up a weed, but I invent a sentence on the matter to yourself; it does not get written; *autant en emportent les vents*; but the intent is there, and for me (in some sort) the companionship. To-day, for instance, we had a great talk. I was toiling, the sweat dripping from my nose, in the hot fit after a squall of rain; methought you asked me—frankly, was I happy. Happy (said I); I was only happy once; that was at Hyères; it came to an end from a variety of reasons, decline of health, change of place, increase of money, age with his stealing steps; since then, as before then, I know not what it means. But I know pleasure still; pleasure with a thousand faces, and none perfect, a thousand tongues all broken, a thousand hands, and all of them with scratching nails. High among these I place this delight of weeding out here alone by the garrulous water, under the silence of the high wood,

broken by incongruous sounds of birds. And take my life all through, look at it fore and back, and upside down,—though I would very fain change myself—I would not change my circumstances, unless it were to bring you here. And yet God knows perhaps this intercourse of writing serves as well; and I wonder, were you here indeed, would I commune so continually with the thought of you. I say 'I wonder' for a form; I know, and I know I should not.

So far, and much further, the conversation went, while I groped in slime after viscous roots, nursing and sparing little spears of grass, and retreating (even with outcry) from the prod of the wild lime. I wonder if any one had ever the same attitude to Nature as I hold, and have held for so long? This business fascinates me like a tune or a passion; yet all the while I thrill with a strong distaste. The horror of the thing, objective and subjective, is always present to my mind; the horror of creeping things, a superstitious horror of the void and the powers about me, the horror of my own devastation and continual murders. The life of the plants comes through my finger-tips, their struggles go to my heart like supplications. I feel myself blood-boltered; then I look back on my cleared grass, and count myself an ally in a fair quarrel, and make stout my heart.

It is but a little while since I lay sick in Sydney, beating the fields about the navy and Dean Swift and Drydens Latin hymns; judge if I love this reinvigorating climate, where I can already toil till

my head swims and every string in the poor jumping Jack (as he now lies in bed) aches with a kind of yearning strain, difficult to suffer in quiescence.

As for my damned literature,[1] God knows what a business it is, grinding along without a scrap of inspiration or a note of style. But it has to be ground, and the mill grinds exceeding slowly though not particularly small. The last two chapters have taken me considerably over a month, and they are still beneath pity. This I cannot continue, time not sufficing; and the next will just have to be worse. All the good I can express is just this; some day, when style revisits me, they will be excellent matter to rewrite. Of course, my old cure of a change of work would probably answer, but I cannot take it now. The treadmill turns; and, with a kind of desperate cheerfulness, I mount the idle stair. I haven't the least anxiety about the book; unless I die, I shall find the time to make it good; but the Lord deliver me from the thought of the Letters! However, the Lord has other things on hand; and about six to-morrow, I shall resume the consideration practically, and face (as best I may) the fact of my incompetence and disaffection to the task. Toil I do not spare; but fortune refuses me success. We can do more, Whatever-his-name-was, we can deserve it. But my misdesert began long since, by the acceptation of a bargain quite unsuitable to all my methods.[2]

[1] The South Sea Letters.

[2] The price advanced for these Letters was among the considerations which originally induced the writer to set out on his Pacific voyage.

To-day I have had a queer experience. My carter has from the first been using my horses for his own ends; when I left for Sydney, I put him on his honour to cease, and my back was scarce turned ere he was forfeit. I have only been waiting to discharge him; and to-day an occasion arose. I am so much *the old man virulent*, so readily stumble into anger, that I gave a deal of consideration to my bearing, and decided at last to imitate that of the late——. Whatever he might have to say, this eminently effective controversialist maintained a frozen demeanour and a jeering smile. The frozen demeanour is beyond my reach; but I could try the jeering smile; did so, perceived its efficacy, kept in consequence my temper, and got rid of my friend, myself composed and smiling still, he white and shaking like an aspen. He could explain everything; I said it did not interest me. He said he had enemies; I said nothing was more likely. He said he was calumniated; with all my heart, said I, but there are so many liars, that I find it safer to believe them. He said, in justice to himself, he must explain: God forbid I should interfere with you, said I, with the same factitious grin, but it can change nothing. So I kept my temper, rid myself of an unfaithful servant, found a method of conducting similar interviews in the future, and fell in my own liking. One thing more: I learned a fresh tolerance for the dead——; he too had learned—perhaps had invented—the trick of this manner; God knows what weakness, what instability of feeling, lay beneath. *Ce que c'est que de nous!* poor human nature; that at

past forty I must adjust this hateful mask for the first time, and rejoice to find it effective; that the effort of maintaining an external smile should confuse and embitter a man's soul.

To-day I have not weeded; I have written instead from six till eleven, from twelve till two; with the interruption of the interview aforesaid; a damned Letter is written for the third time; I dread to read it, for I dare not give it a fourth chance—unless it be very bad indeed. Now I write you from my mosquito curtain, to the song of saws and planes and hammers, and wood clumping on the floor above; in a day of heavenly brightness; a bird twittering near by; my eye, through the open door, commanding green meads, two or three forest trees casting their boughs against the sky, a forest-clad mountain-side beyond, and close in by the door-jamb a nick of the blue Pacific. It is March in England, bleak March, and I lie here with the great sliding doors wide open in an undershirt and p'jama trousers, and melt in the closure of mosquito bars, and burn to be out in the breeze. A few torn clouds—not white, the sun has tinged them a warm pink—swim in heaven. In which blessed and fair day, I have to make faces and speak bitter words to a man—who has deceived me, it is true—but who is poor, and older than I, and a kind of a gentleman too. On the whole, I prefer the massacre of weeds.

*Sunday.*—When I had done talking to you yesterday, I played on my pipe till the conch sounded, then went over to the old house for dinner, and had scarce risen from table ere I was submerged with

visitors. The first of these despatched, I spent the rest of the evening going over the Samoan translation of my *Bottle Imp*[1] with Claxton the missionary; then to bed, but being upset, I suppose, by these interruptions, and having gone all day without my weeding, not to sleep. For hours I lay awake and heard the rain fall, and saw faint, far-away lightning over the sea, and wrote you long letters which I scorn to reproduce. This morning Paul was unusually early; the dawn had scarce begun when he appeared with the tray and lit my candle; and I had breakfasted and read (with indescribable sinkings) the whole of yesterday's work before the sun had risen. Then I sat and thought, and sat and better thought. It was not good enough, nor good; it was as slack as journalism, but not so inspired; it was excellent stuff misused, and the defects stood gross on it like humps upon a camel. But could I, in my present disposition, do much more with it? in my present pressure for time, were I not better employed doing another one about as ill, than making this some thousandth fraction better? Yes, I thought; and tried the new one, and behold, I could do nothing: my head swims, words do not come to me, nor phrases, and I accepted defeat, packed up my traps, and turned to communicate the failure to my esteemed correspondent. I think it possible I

[1] The first serial tale, says Mr. Clarke, ever read by Samoans in their own language was the story of the *Bottle Imp*, 'which found its way into print at Samoa, and was read with wonder and delight in many a thatched Samoan hut before it won the admiration of readers at home.' In the English form the story was published first in Black and White, and afterwards in the volume called *Island Nights' Entertainments*.

overworked yesterday. Well, we'll see to-morrow—perhaps try again later. It is indeed the hope of trying later that keeps me writing to you. If I take to my pipe, I know myself—all is over for the morning. Hurray, I'll correct proofs!

*Pago-Pago, Wednesday.*—After I finished on Sunday I passed a miserable day; went out weeding, but could not find peace. I do not like to steal my dinner, unless I have given myself a holiday in a canonical manner; and weeding after all is only fun, the amount of its utility small, and the thing capable of being done faster and nearly as well by a hired boy. In the evening Sewall came up (American consul) and proposed to take me on a malaga,[1] which I accepted. Monday I rode down to Apia, was nearly all day fighting about drafts and money; the silver problem does not touch you, but it is (in a strange and I hope passing phase) making my situation difficult in Apia.

About eleven, the flags were all half-masted; it was old Captain Hamilton (Samasoni the natives called him) who had passed away. In the evening I walked round to the U. S. consulate; it was a lovely night with a full moon; and as I got round to the hot corner of Matautu I heard hymns in front. The balcony of the dead man's house was full of women singing; Mary (the widow, a native) sat on a chair by the doorstep, and I was set beside her on a bench, and next to Paul the carpenter; as I sat down I had a glimpse of the old captain, who lay in a sheet on his own table. After the hymn was over, a native

[1] Boating expedition: pronounce *malanga*.

pastor made a speech which lasted a long while; the light poured out of the door and windows; the girls were sitting clustered at my feet; it was choking hot. After the speech was ended, Mary carried me within; the captain's hands were folded on his bosom, his face and head were composed; he looked as if he might speak at any moment; I have never seen this kind of waxwork so express or more venerable; and when I went away, I was conscious of a certain envy for the man who was out of the battle. All night it ran in my head, and the next day when we sighted Tutuila, and ran into this beautiful landlocked loch of Pago Pago (whence I write), Captain Hamilton's folded hands and quiet face said a great deal more to me than the scenery.

I am living here in a trader's house; we have a good table, Sewall doing things in style; and I hope to benefit by the change, and possibly get more stuff for Letters. In the meanwhile, I am seized quite *mal-à-propos* with desire to write a story, *The Bloody Wedding*, founded on fact—very possibly true, being an attempt to read a murder case—not yet months old, in this very place and house where I now write. The indiscretion is what stops me; but if I keep on feeling as I feel just now it will have to be written. Three Star Nettison, Kit Nettison, Field the Sailor, these are the main characters: old Nettison, and the captain of the man of war, the secondary. Possible scenario. Chapter I. . . .

## To Sidney Colvin

*Saturday, April 18th* [1891]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I got back on Monday night, after twenty-three hours in an open boat; the keys were lost; the consul (who had promised us a bottle of Burgundy) nobly broke open his storeroom, and we got to bed about midnight. Next morning the blessed consul promised us horses for the daybreak; forgot all about it, worthy man; set us off at last in the heat of the day, and by a short cut which caused infinite trouble, and we were not home till dinner. I was extenuated, and have had a high fever since, or should have been writing before. To-day for the first time, I risk it. Tuesday I was pretty bad; Wednesday had a fever to kill a horse; Thursday I was better, but still out of ability to do aught but read awful trash. This is the time one misses civilisation; I wished to send out for some police novels; Montépin would have about suited my frozen brain. It is a bother when all one's thought turns on one's work in some sense or other; I could not even think yesterday; I took to inventing dishes by way of entertainment. Yesterday, while I lay asleep in the afternoon, a very lucky thing happened; the Chief Justice came to call; met one of our employés on the road; and was shown what I had done to the road.

'Is this the road across the island?' he asked.

'The only one,' said Innes.

'And has one man done all this?'

'Three times,' said the trusty Innes. 'It has had

to be made three times, and when Mr. Stevenson came, it was a track like what you see beyond.'

'This must be put right,' said the Chief Justice.

*Sunday.*—The truth is, I broke down yesterday almost as soon as I began, and have been surreptitiously finishing the entry to-day. For all that I was much better, ate all the time, and had no fever. The day was otherwise uneventful. I am reminded; I had another visitor on Friday; and Fanny and Lloyd, as they returned from a forest raid, met in our desert, untrodden road, first Father Didier, Keeper of the conscience of Mataafa, the rising star; and next the Chief Justice, sole stay of Laupepa, the present and unsteady star, and remember, a few days before we were close to the sick bed and entertained by the amateur physician of Tamasese, the late and sunken star. 'That is the fun of this place,' observed Lloyd; 'everybody you meet is so important.' Everybody is also so gloomy. It will come to war again, is the opinion of all the well informed—and before that to many bankruptcies; and after that, as usual, to famine. Here, under the microscope, we can see history at work.

*Wednesday.*—I have been very neglectful. A return to work, perhaps premature, but necessary, has used up all my possible energies and made me acquainted with the living headache. I just jot down some of the past notabilia. Yesterday B., a carpenter, and K., my (unsuccessful) white man, were absent all morning from their work; I was working myself, where I hear every sound with morbid certainty, and I can testify that not a hammer fell.

Upon inquiry I found they had passed the morning making ice with our ice machine and taking the horizon with a spirit level! I had no sooner heard this than—a violent headache set in; I am a real employer of labour now, and have much of the ship captain when aroused; and if I had a headache, I believe both these gentlemen had aching hearts. I promise you, the late—— was to the front; and K., who was the most guilty, yet (in a sense) the least blameable, having the brains and character of a canary-bird, fared none the better for B.'s repartees. I hear them hard at work this morning, so the menace may be blessed. It was just after my dinner, just before theirs, that I administered my redoubtable tongue—it is really redoubtable—to these skulkers. (Paul used to triumph over Mr. J. for weeks. 'I am very sorry for you,' he would say; 'you're going to have a talk with Mr. Stevenson when he comes home: you don't know what that is!') In fact, none of them do, till they get it. I have known K., for instance, for months; he has never heard me complain, or take notice, unless it were to praise; I have used him always as my guest, and there seems to be something in my appearance which suggests endless, ovine long-suffering! We sat in the upper verandah all evening, and discussed the price of iron roofing, and the state of the draught-horses, with Innes, a new man we have taken, and who seems to promise well.

One thing embarrasses me. No one ever seems to understand my attitude about that book; the stuff sent was never meant for other than a first state;

I never meant it to appear as a book. Knowing well that I have never had one hour of inspiration since it was begun, and have only beaten out my metal by brute force and patient repetition, I hoped some day to get a 'spate of style' and burnish it—fine mixed metaphor. I am now so sick that I intend, when the Letters are done and some more written that will be wanted, simply to make a book of it by the pruning-knife. I cannot fight longer; I am sensible of having done worse than I hoped, worse than I feared; all I can do now is to do the best I can for the future, and clear the book, like a piece of bush, with axe and cutlass. Even to produce the MS. of this will occupy me, at the most favourable opinion, till the middle of next year; really five years were wanting, when I could have made a book; but I have a family, and—perhaps I could not make the book after all.

## To W. Craibe Angus

The late Mr. Craibe Angus of Glasgow was one of the chief organisers of the Burns Exhibition in that city, and had proposed to send out to Samoa a precious copy of the *Jolly Beggars* to receive the autograph of R. L. S. and be returned for the purposes of that Exhibition. The line quoted, 'But still our hearts are true,' etc., should, it appears, run, 'But still the blood is strong, the heart is Highland.' The author of the *Canadian Boat Song* which opens thus was Hugh, twelfth Earl of Eglinton. The first quotation is of course from Burns.

*Vailima, Samoa, April* 1891

DEAR MR. ANGUS,—Surely I remember you! It was W. C. Murray who made us acquainted, and we had a pleasant crack. I see your poet is not yet

dead. I remember even our talk—or you would not think of trusting that invaluable *Jolly Beggars* to the treacherous posts, and the perils of the sea, and the carelessness of authors. I love the idea, but I could not bear the risk. However—

'Hale be your heart, hale be your fiddle—'

it was kindly thought upon.

My interest in Burns is, as you supposed, perennial. I would I could be present at the exhibition, with the purpose of which I heartily sympathise; but the *Nancy* has not waited in vain for me, I have followed my chest, the anchor is weighed long ago, I have said my last farewell to the hills and the heather and the lynns: like Leyden, I have gone into far lands to die, not stayed like Burns to mingle in the end with Scottish soil. I shall not even return like Scott for the last scene. Burns Exhibitions are all over. 'Tis a far cry to Lochow from tropical Vailima.

'But still our hearts are true, our hearts are Highland,
And we in dreams behold the Hebrides.'

When your hand is in, will you remember our poor Edinburgh Robin? Burns alone has been just to his promise; follow Burns, he knew best, he knew whence he drew fire—from the poor, white-faced, drunken, vicious boy that raved himself to death in the Edinburgh madhouse. Surely there is more to be gleaned about Fergusson, and surely it is high time the task was set about. I may tell you (because your poet is not dead) something of how I

feel: we are three Robins who have touched the Scots lyre this last century. Well, the one is the world's; he did it, he came off, he is for ever; but I am the other—ah! what bonds we have—born in the same city; both sickly, both pestered, one nearly to madness, one to the madhouse, with a damnatory creed; both seeing the stars and the dawn, and wearing shoe-leather on the same ancient stones, under the same pends, down the same closes, where our common ancestors clashed in their armour, rusty or bright. And the old Robin, who was before Burns and the flood, died in his acute, painful youth, and left the models of the great things that were to come; and the new, who came after, outlived his green-sickness, and has faintly tried to parody the finished work. If you will collect the strays of Robin Fergusson, fish for material, collect any last re-echoing of gossip, command me to do what you prefer—to write the preface—to write the whole if you prefer: anything, so that another monument (after Burns's) be set up to my unhappy predecessor on the causey of Auld Reekie. You will never know, nor will any man, how deep this feeling is: I believe Fergusson lives in me. I do, but tell it not in Gath; every man has these fanciful superstitions, coming, going, but yet enduring; only most men are so wise (or the poet in them so dead) that they keep their follies for themselves.—I am, yours very truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## To Edmund Gosse

*Vailima, April* 1891

MY DEAR GOSSE,—I have to thank you and Mrs. Gosse for many mementoes, chiefly for your *Life* of your father. There is a very delicate task, very delicately done. I noted one or two carelessnesses, which I meant to point out to you for another edition; but I find I lack the time, and you will remark them for yourself against a new edition. There were two, or perhaps three, flabbinesses of style which (in your work) amazed me. Am I right in thinking you were a shade bored over the last chapters? or was it my own fault that made me think them susceptible of a more athletic compression? (The flabbinesses were not there, I think, but in the more admirable part, where they showed the bigger.) Take it all together, the book struck me as if you had been hurried at the last, but particularly hurried over the proofs, and could still spend a very profitable fortnight in earnest revision and (towards the end) heroic compression. The book, in design, subject, and general execution, is well worth the extra trouble. And even if I were wrong in thinking it specially wanted, it will not be lost; for do we not know, in Flaubert's dread confession, that 'prose is never done'? What a medium to work in, for a man tired, perplexed among different aims and subjects, and spurred by the immediate need of 'siller'! However, it's mine for what it's worth; and it's one of yours, the devil take it; and you know, as well as

Flaubert, and as well as me, that it is *never done*; in other words, it is a torment of the pit, usually neglected by the bards who (lucky beggars!) approached the Styx in measure. I speak bitterly at the moment, having just detected in myself the last fatal symptom, three blank verses in succession—and I believe, God help me, a hemistich at the tail of them; hence I have deposed the labourer, come out of hell by my private trap, and now write to you from my little place in purgatory. But I prefer hell: would I could always dig in those red coals—or else be at sea in a schooner, bound for isles unvisited: to be on shore and not to work is emptiness—suicidal vacancy.

I was the more interested in your *Life* of your father, because I meditate one of mine, or rather of my family. I have no such materials as you, and (our objections already made) your attack fills me with despair; it is direct and elegant, and your style is always admirable to me—lenity, lucidity, usually a high strain of breeding, an elegance that has a pleasant air of the accidental. But beware of purple passages. I wonder if you think as well of your purple passages as I do of mine? I wonder if you think as ill of mine as I do of yours? I wonder; I can tell you at least what is wrong with yours—they are treated in the spirit of verse. The spirit—I don't mean the measure, I don't mean you fall into bastard cadences; what I mean is that they seem vacant and smoothed out, ironed, if you like. And in a style which (like yours) aims more and more successfully at the academic, one purple word is al-

ready much; three—a whole phrase—is inadmissible. Wed yourself to a clean austerity: that is your force. Wear a linen ephod, spendidly candid. Arrange its folds, but do not fasten it with any brooch. I swear to you, in your talking robes, there should be no patch of adornment; and where the subject forces, let it force you no further than it must; and be ready with a twinkle of your pleasantry. Yours is a fine tool, and I see so well how to hold it; I wonder if you see how to hold mine? But then I am to the neck in prose, and just now in the 'dark *interstylar* cave,' all methods and effects wooing me, myself in the midst impotent to follow any. I look for dawn presently, and a full flowing river of expression, running whither it wills. But these useless seasons, above all, when a man *must* continue to spoil paper, are infinitely weary.

We are in our house after a fashion; without furniture, 'tis true, camping there, like the family after a sale. But the bailiff has not yet appeared; he will probably come after. The place is beautiful beyond dreams; some fifty miles of the Pacific spread in front; deep woods all round; a mountain making in the sky a profile of huge trees upon our left; about us, the little island of our clearing, studded with brave old gentlemen (or ladies, or 'the twa o' them') whom we have spared. It is a good place to be in; night and morning, we have Theodore Rousseaus (always a new one) hung to amuse us on the walls of the world; and the moon—this is our good season, we have a moon just now—makes the night a piece of heaven. It amazes me

how people can live on in the dirty north; yet if you saw our rainy season (which is really a caulker for wind, wet, and darkness—howling showers, roaring winds, pit-blackness at noon) you might marvel how we could endure that. And we can't. But there's a winter everywhere; only ours is in the summer. Mark my words: there will be a winter in heaven—and in hell. *Cela rentre dans les procêdês du bon Dieu; et vous verrez!* There's another very good thing about Vailima, I am away from the little bubble of the literary life. It is not all beer and skittles, is it? By the by, my *Ballads* seem to have been dam bad; all the crickets sing so in their crickety papers; and I have no ghost of an idea on the point myself: verse is always to me the unknowable. You might tell me how it strikes a professional bard: not that it really matters, for, of course, good or bad, I don't think I shall get into *that* galley any more. But I should like to know if you join the shrill chorus of the crickets. The crickets are the devil in all to you: 'tis a strange thing, they seem to rejoice like a strong man in their injustice. I trust you got my letter about your Browning book. In case it missed, I wish to say again that your publication of Browning's kind letter, as an illustration of *his* character, was modest, proper, and in radiant good taste.—In Witness whereof, etc. etc.,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## To Miss Rawlinson

The next is written to a young friend and visitor of Bournemouth days (see vol. ii. p. 341) on the news of her engagement to Mr. Alfred Spender.

*Vailima, Apia, Samoa, April* 1891

MY DEAR MAY,—I never think of you by any more ceremonial name, so I will not pretend. There is not much chance that I shall forget you until the time comes for me to forget all this little turmoil in a corner (though indeed I have been in several corners) of an inconsiderable planet. You remain in my mind for a good reason, having given me (in so short a time) the most delightful pleasure. I shall remember, and you must still be beautiful. The truth is, you must grow more so, or you will soon be less. It is not so easy to be a flower, even when you bear a flower's name. And if I admired you so much, and still remember you, it is not because of your face, but because you were then worthy of it, as you must still continue.

Will you give my heartiest congratulations to Mr. Spender? He has my admiration; he is a brave man; when I was young, I should have run away from the sight of you, pierced with the sense of my unfitness. He is more wise and manly. What a good husband he will have to be! And you—what a good wife! Carry your love tenderly. I will never forgive him—or you—it is in both your hands —if the face that once gladdened my heart should be changed into one sour or sorrowful.

What a person you are to give flowers! It was

so I first heard of you; and now you are giving the May flower!

Yes, Skerryvore has passed; it was, for us. But I wish you could see us in our new home on the mountain, in the middle of great woods, and looking far out over the Pacific. When Mr. Spender is very rich, he must bring you round the world and let you see it, and see the old gentleman and the old lady. I mean to live quite a long while yet, and my wife must do the same, or else I couldn't manage it; so, you see, you will have plenty of time; and it's a pity not to see the most beautiful places, and the most beautiful people moving there, and the real stars and moon overhead, instead of the tin imitations that preside over London. I do not think my wife very well; but I am in hopes she will now have a little rest. It has been a hard business, above all for her; we lived four months in the hurricane season in a miserable house, overborne with work, ill-fed, continually worried, drowned in perpetual rain, beaten upon by wind, so that we must sit in the dark in the evenings; and then I ran away, and she had a month of it alone. Things go better now; the back of the work is broken; and we are still foolish enough to look forward to a little peace. I am a very different person from the prisoner of Skerryvore. The other day I was three-and-twenty hours in an open boat; it made me pretty ill; but fancy its not killing me half-way! It is like a fairy story that I should have recovered liberty and strength, and should go round again among my fellow-men, boating, riding, bathing, toiling hard

with a wood-knife in the forest. I can wish you nothing more delightful than my fortune in life; I wish it you; and better, if the thing be possible.

Lloyd is tinkling below me on the typewriter; my wife has just left the room; she asks me to say she would have written had she been well enough, and hopes to do it still.—Accept the best wishes of your admirer,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## To Sidney Colvin

This letter announces (1) the arrival of Mrs. Thomas Stevenson from Sydney, to take up her abode in her son's island home now that the conditions of life there had been made fairly comfortable; and (2) the receipt of a letter from me expressing the disappointment felt by Stevenson's friends at home at the impersonal and even tedious character of some portions of the South Sea Letters that had reached us. As a corrective of this opinion, I may perhaps mention here that there is a certain many-voyaged master-mariner as well as master-writer—no less a person than Mr. Joseph Conrad—who does not at all share it, and prefers *In the South Seas* to *Treasure Island*.

[*Vailima*] *April 29th*, '91

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I begin again. I was awake this morning about half-past four. It was still night, but I made my fire, which is always a delightful employment, and read Lockhart's *Scott* until the day began to peep. It was a beautiful and sober dawn, a dove-coloured dawn, insensibly brightening to gold. I was looking at it some while over the down-hill profile of our eastern road, when I chanced to glance northward, and saw with extraordinary pleasure the sea lying outspread. It seemed as smooth as glass, and yet I knew the surf

was roaring all along the reef, and indeed, if I had listened, I could have heard it—and saw the white sweep of it outside Matautu.

I am out of condition still, and can do nothing, and toil to be at my pen, and see some ink behind me. I have taken up again *The High Woods of Ulufanua*. I still think the fable too fantastic and far-fetched. But, on a re-reading, fell in love with my first chapter, and for good or evil I must finish it. It is really good, well fed with facts, true to the manners, and (for once in my works) rendered pleasing by the presence of a heroine who is pretty. Miss Uma is pretty; a fact. All my other women have been as ugly as sin, and like Falconet's horse (I have just been reading the anecdote in Lockhart), *mortes* forbye.

News: our old house is now half demolished; it is to be rebuilt on a new site; now we look down upon and through the open posts of it like a bird-cage, to the woods beyond. My poor Paulo has lost his father and succeeded to thirty thousand thalers (I think); he had to go down to the consulate yesterday to send a legal paper; got drunk, of course, and is still this morning in so bemused a condition that our breakfasts all went wrong. Lafaele is absent at the death bed of his fair spouse; fair she was, but not in deed, acting as harlot to the wreckers at work on the warships, to which society she probably owes her end, having fallen off a cliff, or been thrust off it—*inter pocula*. Henry is the same, our stand-by. In this transition stage he has been living in Apia; but the other night he stayed up, and sat with us

about the chimney in my room. It was the first time he had seen a fire in a hearth; he could not look at it without smiles, and was always anxious to put on another stick. We entertained him with the fairy tales of civilisation—theatres, London, blocks in the street, Universities, the Underground, newspapers, etc., and projected once more his visit to Sydney. If we can manage, it will be next Christmas. (I see it will be impossible for me to afford a further journey *this* winter.) We have spent since we have been here about £2,500, which is not much if you consider we have built on that three houses, one of them of some size, and a considerable stable, made two miles of road some three times, cleared many acres of bush, made some miles of path, planted quantities of food, and enclosed a horse paddock and some acres of pig run; but 'tis a good deal of money regarded simply as money. K. is bosh; I have no use for him; but we must do what we can with the fellow meanwhile; he is good-humoured and honest, but inefficient, idle himself, the cause of idleness in others, grumbling, a self-excuser—all the faults in a bundle. He owes us thirty weeks' service—the wretched Paul about half as much. Henry is almost the only one of our employés who has a credit.

*May 17th.*—Well, am I ashamed of myself? I do not think so. I have been hammering Letters ever since, and got three ready and a fourth about half through; all four will go by the mail, which is what I wish, for so I keep at least my start. Days and days of unprofitable stubbing and digging, and

the result still poor as literature, left-handed, heavy, unillumined, but I believe readable and interesting as matter. It has been no joke of a hard time, and when my task was done, I had little taste for anything but blowing on the pipe. A few necessary letters filled the bowl to overflowing.

My mother has arrived, young, well, and in good spirits. By desperate exertions, which have wholly floored Fanny, her room was ready for her, and the dining-room fit to eat in. It was a famous victory. Lloyd never told me of your portrait till a few days ago; fortunately, I had no pictures hung yet; and the space over my chimney waits your counterfeit presentment. I have not often heard anything that pleased me more; your severe head shall frown upon me and keep me to the mark. But why has it not come? Have you been as forgetful as Lloyd?

18*th*.—Miserable comforters are ye all! I read your esteemed pages this morning by lamplight and the glimmer of the dawn, and as soon as breakfast was over, I must turn to and tackle these despised labours! Some courage was necessary, but not wanting. There is one thing at least by which I can avenge myself for my drubbing, for on one point you seem impenetrably stupid. Can I find no form of words which will at last convey to your intelligence the fact that *these letters were never meant, and are not now meant, to be other than a quarry of materials from which the book may be drawn*? There seems something incommunicable in this (to me) simple idea; I know Lloyd failed to comprehend it, I doubt if he has grasped it now; and I despair,

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after all these efforts, that you should ever be enlightened. Still, oblige me by reading that form of words once more, and see if a light does not break. You may be sure, after the friendly freedoms of your criticism (necessary I am sure, and wholesome I know, but untimely to the poor labourer in his landslip) that mighty little of it will stand.

Our Paul has come into a fortune, and wishes to go home to the Hie Germanie. This is a tile on our head, and if a shower, which is now falling, lets up, I must go down to Apia, and see if I can find a substitute of any kind. This is, from any point of view, disgusting; above all, from that of work; for, whatever the result, the mill has to be kept turning; apparently dust, and not flour, is the proceed. Well, there is gold in the dust, which is a fine consolation, since—well, I can't help it; night or morning, I do my darndest, and if I cannot charge for merit, I must e'en charge for toil, of which I have plenty and plenty more ahead before this cup is drained; sweat and hyssop are the ingredients.

We are clearing from Carruthers' Road to the pig fence, twenty-eight powerful natives with Catholic medals about their necks, all swiping in like Trojans; long may the sport continue!

The invoice to hand. Ere this goes out, I hope to see your expressive, but surely not benignant countenance! Adieu, O culler of offensive expressions—'and a' to be a posy to your ain dear May!' —Fanny seems a little revived again after her spasm of work. Our books and furniture keep slowly draining up the road, in a sad state of scatterment

and disrepair; I wish the devil had had K. by his red beard before he had packed my library. Odd leaves and sheets and boards—a thing to make a bibliomaniac shed tears—are fished out of odd corners. But I am no bibliomaniac, praise Heaven, and I bear up, and rejoice when I find anything safe.

19*th*.—However, I worked five hours on the brute, and finished my Letter all the same, and couldn't sleep last night by consequence. Haven't had a bad night since I don't know when; dreamed a large handsome man (a New Orleans planter) had insulted my wife, and, do what I pleased, I could not make him fight me; and woke to find it was the eleventh anniversary of my marriage. A letter usually takes me from a week to three days; but I'm sometimes two days on a page—I was once three—and then my friends kick me. *C'est-y-bête!* I wish letters of that charming quality could be so timed as to arrive when a fellow wasn't working at the truck in question; but, of course, that can't be. Did not go down last night. It showered all afternoon, and poured heavy and loud all night.

You should have seen our twenty-five popés (the Samoan phrase for a Catholic, lay or cleric) squatting when the day's work was done on the ground outside the verandah, and pouring in the rays of forty-eight eyes through the back and the front door of the dining-room, while Henry and I and the boss pope signed the contract. The second boss (an old man) wore a kilt (as usual) and a Balmoral bonnet with a little tartan edging and the tails pulled off. I told him that hat belong to my country—Sekotia;

and he said, yes, that was the place that he belonged to right enough. And then all the Papists laughed till the woods rang; he was slashing away with a cutlass as he spoke.

The pictures[1] have decidedly not come; they may probably arrive Sunday.

## To Miss Adelaide Boodle

The reference in the first paragraph is to a previous letter concerning private matters, in which Stevenson had remonstrated with his correspondent on what seemed to him her mistaken reasons for a certain course of conduct.

[*Vailima, May* 1891]

MY DEAR ADELAIDE,—I will own you just did manage to tread on my gouty toe; and I beg to assure you with most people I should simply have turned away and said no more. My cudgelling was therefore in the nature of a caress or testimonial.

God forbid, I should seem to judge for you on such a point; it was what you seemed to set forth as your reasons that fluttered my old Presbyterian spirit—for, mind you, I am a child of the Covenanters—whom I do not love, but they are mine after all, my father's and my mother's—and they had their merits, too, and their ugly beauties, and grotesque heroisms, that I love them for, the while I laugh at them; but in their name and mine do what you think right, and let the world fall. That is the privilege and the duty of private persons; and I shall think the more of you at the greater distance, because you keep a promise to your fellow-man,

[1] Portraits of myself for which he had asked.

your helper and creditor in life, by just so much as I was tempted to think the less of you (O not much, or I would never have been angry) when I thought you were the swallower of a (tinfoil) formula.

I must say I was uneasy about my letter, not because it was too strong as an expression of my unregenerate sentiments, but because I knew full well it should be followed by something kinder. And the mischief has been in my health. I fell sharply sick in Sydney, was put aboard the *Lübeck* pretty bad, got to Vailima, hung on a month there, and didn't pick up as well as my work needed; set off on a journey, gained a great deal, lost it again; and am back at Vailima, still no good at my necessary work. I tell you this for my imperfect excuse that I should not have written you again sooner to remove the bad taste of my last.

A road has been called Adelaide Road; it leads from the back of our house to the bridge, and thence to the garden, and by a bifurcation to the pig pen. It is thus much traversed, particularly by Fanny. An oleander, the only one of your seeds that prospered in this climate, grows there; and the name is now some week or ten days applied and published. ADELAIDE ROAD leads also into the bush, to the banana patch, and by a second bifurcation over the left branch of the stream to the plateau and the right hand of the gorges. In short, it leads to all sorts of good, and is, besides, in itself a pretty winding path, bound downhill among big woods to the margin of the stream.

What a strange idea, to think me a Jew-hater!

Isaiah and David and Heine are good enough for me; and I leave more unsaid. Were I of Jew blood, I do not think I could ever forgive the Christians; the ghettos would get in my nostrils like mustard or lit gunpowder. Just so you, as being a child of the Presbytery, I retain—I need not dwell on that. The ascendant hand is what I feel most strongly; I am bound in and in with my forbears; were he one of mine, I should not be struck at all by Mr. Moss of Bevis Marks, I should still see behind him Moses of the Mount and the Tables and the shining face. We are all nobly born; fortunate those who know it; blessed those who remember.

I am, my dear Adelaide, most genuinely yours,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Write by return to say you are better, and I will try to do the same.

## To Charles Baxter

The following refers again to the project of a long genealogical novel expanded from the original idea of *Henry Shovel.*

[*Vailima*] *Tuesday, 19th May* '91

MY DEAR CHARLES,—I don't know what you think of me, not having written to you at all during your illness. I find two sheets begun with your name, but that is no excuse. . . . I am keeping bravely; getting about better every day, and hope soon to be in my usual fettle. My books begin to come; and I fell once more on the Old Bailey session papers. I have 1778, 1784, and 1786. Should you be able to lay hands on any other volumes, above all a little

later, I should be very glad you should buy them for me. I particularly want *one* or *two* during the course of the Peninsular War. Come to think, I ought rather to have communicated this want to Bain. Would it bore you to communicate to that effect with the great man? The sooner I have them, the better for me. 'Tis for *Henry Shovel.* But *Henry Shovel* has now turned into a work called *The Shovels of Newton French: including Memoirs of Henry Shovel, a Private in the Peninsular War,* which work is to begin in 1664 with the marriage of Skipper, afterwards Alderman Shovel of Bristol, Henry's great-great-grandfather, and end about 1832 with his own second marriage to the daughter of his runaway aunt. Will the public ever stand such an opus? Gude kens, but it tickles me. Two or three historical personages will just appear: Judge Jeffreys, Wellington, Colquhoun, Grant, and I think Townsend the runner. I know the public won't like it; let 'em lump it then; I mean to make it good; it will be more like a saga.

Adieu.—Yours ever affectionately,

R. L. STEVENSON

## TO SIDNEY COLVIN

*[Vailima] June* 1891

SIR,—To you, under your portrait, which is, in expression, your true, breathing self, and up to now saddens me; in time, and soon, I shall be glad to have it there; it is still only a reminder of your absence. Fanny wept when we unpacked it, and you

know how little she is given to that mood; I was scarce Roman myself, but that does not count—I lift up my voice so readily. These are good compliments to the artist.[1] I write in the midst of a wreck of books, which have just come up, and have for once defied my labours to get straight. The whole floor is filled with them, and (what's worse) most of the shelves forbye; and where they are to go to, and what is to become of the librarian, God knows. It is hot to-night, and has been airless all day, and I am out of sorts, and my work sticks, the devil fly away with it and me. We had an alarm of war since last I wrote my screeds to you, and it blew over, and is to blow on again, and the rumour goes they are to begin by killing all the whites. I have no belief in this, and should be infinitely sorry if it came to pass—I do not mean for *us*, that were otiose—but for the poor, deluded schoolboys, who should hope to gain by such a step.

*Letter resumed, June 20th.*—No diary this time. Why? you ask. I have only sent out four letters, and two chapters of *The Wrecker*. Yes, but to get these I have written 132 pp., 66,000 words in thirty days; 2200 words a day; the labours of an elephant. God knows what it's like, and don't ask me, but nobody shall say I have spared pains. I thought for some time it wouldn't come at all. I was days and days over the first letter of the lot—days and days writing and deleting and making no headway whatever, till I thought I should have gone bust; but it came at last after a fashion, and the rest went

[1] Miss Fanny Macpherson, now Lady Holroyd.

a thought more easily, though I am not so fond as to fancy any better.

Your opinion as to the Letters as a whole is so damnatory that I put them by. But there is a 'hell of a want of' money this year. And these Gilbert Island papers, being the most interesting in matter, and forming a compact whole, and being well illustrated, I did think of as a possible resource.

It would be called

*Six Months in Melanesia,*
*Two Island Kings,*
———— *Monarchies,*
*Gilbert Island Kings,*
———— *Monarchies,*

and I dare say I'll think of a better yet—and would divide thus:—

*Butaritari*

I. A Town asleep.
II. The Three Brothers.
III. Around our House.
IV. A Tale of a Tapu.
V. The Five Days' Festival.
VI. Domestic Life—(which might be omitted, but not well, better be recast).

*The King of Apemama*

VII. The Royal Traders.
VIII. Foundation of Equator Town.
IX. The Palace of Mary Warren.

X. Equator Town and the Palace.
XI. King and Commons.
XII. The Devil Work Box.
XIII. The Three Corslets.
XIV. Tail piece; the Court upon a Journey.

I wish you to watch these closely, judging them as a whole, and treating them as I have asked you, and favour me with your damnatory advice. I look up at your portrait, and it frowns upon me. You seem to view me with reproach. The expression is excellent; Fanny wept when she saw it, and you know she is not given to the melting mood. She seems really better; I have a touch of fever again, I fancy overwork, and to-day, when I have overtaken my letters, I shall blow on my pipe. Tell Mrs. Sitwell I have been playing *Le Chant d'Amour* lately, and have arranged it, after awful trouble, rather prettily for two pipes; and it brought her before me with an effect scarce short of hallucination. I could hear her voice in every note; yet I had forgot the air entirely, and began to pipe it from notes as something new, when I was brought up with a round turn by this reminiscence. We are now very much installed; the dining-room is done, and looks lovely. Soon we shall begin to photograph and send you our circumstances. My room is still a howling wilderness. I sleep on a platform in a window, and strike my mosquito bar and roll up my bedclothes every morning, so that the bed becomes by day a divan. A great part of the floor is knee-deep in books, yet nearly all the shelves are filled, alas! It is a place

to make a pig recoil, yet here are my interminable labours begun daily by lamp-light, and sometimes not yet done when the lamp has once more to be lighted. The effect of pictures in this place is surprising. They give great pleasure.

*June 21st.*—A word more. I had my breakfast this morning at 4.30! My new cook has beaten me and (as Lloyd says) revenged all the cooks in the world. I have been hunting them to give me breakfast early since I was twenty; and now here comes Mr. Ratke, and I have to plead for mercy. I cannot stand 4.30; I am a mere fevered wreck; it is now half-past eight, and I can no more, and four hours divide me from lunch, the devil take the man! Yesterday it was about 5.30, which I can stand; day before 5, which is bad enough; to-day I give out. It is like a London season, and as I do not take a siesta once in a month, and then only five mintues, I am being worn to the bones, and look aged and anxious.

We have Rider Haggard's brother here as a Land Commissioner; a nice kind of a fellow; indeed, all the three Land Commissioners are very agreeable.

## To E. L. Burlingame

For the result of the suggestion made in the following, see Scribner's Magazine, October 1893, p. 494.

*Vailima* [*Summer* 1891]

MY DEAR BURLINGAME,—I find among my grandfather's papers his own reminiscences of his voyage round the north with Sir Walter, eighty years ago, *labuntur anni!* They are not remarkably good, but he was not a bad observer, and several touches seem to me speaking. It has occurred to me you might like them to appear in the Magazine. If you would, kindly let me know, and tell me how you would like it handled. My grandad's MS. runs to between six and seven thousand words, which I could abbreviate of anecdotes that scarce touch Sir W. Would you like this done? Would you like me to introduce the old gentleman? I had something of the sort in my mind, and could fill a few columns rather *à propos*. I give you the first offer of this, according to your request; for though it may forestall one of the interests of my biography, the thing seems to me particularly suited for prior appearance in a magazine.

I see the first number of *The Wrecker*; I thought it went lively enough; and by a singular accident, the picture is not unlike Tai-o-hae!

Thus we see the age of miracles, etc.—Yours very sincerely,

R. L. S.

Proofs for next mail.

## To W. Craibe Angus

Referring again to the Burns Exhibition and to his correspondent's request for an autograph in a special copy of *The Jolly Beggars*.

[*Summer* 1891]

DEAR MR. ANGUS,—You can use my letter as you will. The parcel has not come; pray Heaven the next post bring it safe. Is it possible for me to write a preface here? I will try if you like, if you think I must: though surely there are Rivers in Assyria. Of course you will send me sheets of the catalogue; I suppose it (the preface) need not be long; perhaps it should be rather very short? Be sure you give me your views upon these points. Also tell me what names to mention among those of your helpers, and do remember to register everything, else it is not safe.

The true place (in my view) for a monument to Fergusson were the churchyard of Haddington. But as that would perhaps not carry many votes, I should say one of the two following sites:—First, either as near the site of the old Bedlam as we could get, or, second, beside the Cross, the heart of his city. Upon this I would have a fluttering butterfly, and, I suggest, the citation.

Poor Butterfly, thy case I mourn.

For the case of Fergusson is not one to pretend about. A more miserable tragedy the sun never shone upon, or (in consideration of our climate) I should rather say refused to brighten.—Yours truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Where Burns goes will not matter. He is no local poet, like your Robin the First; he is general

as the casing air. Glasgow, as the chief city of Scottish men, would do well; but for God's sake, don't let it be like the Glasgow memorial to Knox: I remember, when I first saw this, laughing for an hour by Shrewsbury clock.

R. L. S.

## To H. C. Ide

The following is written to the American Land Commissioner (later Chief Justice for a term) in Samoa, whose elder daughter, then at home in the States, had been born on a Christmas Day, and consequently regarded herself as defrauded of her natural rights to a private anniversary of her own.

[*Vailima, June* 19, 1891]

DEAR MR. IDE,—Herewith please find the DOCUMENT, which I trust will prove sufficient in law. It seems to me very attractive in its eclecticism; Scots, English, and Roman law phrases are all indifferently introduced, and a quotation from the works of Haynes Bayly can hardly fail to attract the indulgence of the Bench.—Yours very truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

I, Robert Louis Stevenson, Advocate of the Scots Bar, author of *The Master of Ballantrae* and *Moral Emblems*, stuck civil engineer, sole owner and patentee of the Palace and Plantation known as Vailima in the island of Upolu, Samoa, a British Subject, being in sound mind, and pretty well, I thank you, in body:

In consideration that Miss Annie H. Ide, daughter of H. C. Ide, in the town of Saint Johnsbury, in the country of Caledonia, in the State of Vermont,

United States of America, was born, out of all reason, upon Christmas Day, and is therefore out of all justice denied the consolation and profit of a proper birthday;

And considering that I, the said Robert Louis Stevenson, have attained an age when O, we never mention it, and that I have no now further use for a birthday of any description;

And in consideration that I have met H. C. Ide, the father of the said Annie H. Ide, and found him about as white a land commissioner as I require:

*Have transferred*, and *do hereby transfer*, to the said Annie H. Ide, *all and whole* my rights and privileges in the thirteenth day of November, formerly my birthday, now, hereby, and henceforth, the birthday of the said Annie H. Ide, to have, hold, exercise, and enjoy the same in the customary manner, by the sporting of fine raiment, eating of rich meats, and receipt of gifts, compliments, and copies of verse, according to the manner of our ancestors;

*And I direct* the said Annie H. Ide to add to the said name of Annie H. Ide the name Louisa—at least in private; and I charge her to use my said birthday with moderation and humanity, *et tamquam bona filia familiæ*, the said birthday not being so young as it once was, and having carried me in a very satisfactory manner since I can remember;

And in case the said Annie H. Ide shall neglect or contravene either of the above conditions, I hereby revoke the donation and transfer my rights in the said birthday to the President of the United States of America for the time being:

In witness whereof I have hereto set my hand and seal this nineteenth day of June in the year of grace eighteen hundred and ninety-one.

SEAL

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

*Witness*, LLOYD OSBOURNE,
*Witness*, HAROLD WATTS.

## To SIDNEY COLVIN

The misgivings herein expressed about the imminence of a native war were not realised until two years later, and the plans of defence into which Stevenson here enters with characteristic gusto were not put to the test.

[*Vailima, June and July* 1891]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I am so hideously in arrears that I know not where to begin. However, here I am a prisoner in my room, unfit for work, incapable of reading with interest, and trying to catch up a bit. We have a guest here: a welcome guest: my Sydney music master, whose health broke down, and who came with his remarkable simplicity, to ask a month's lodging. He is newly married, his wife in the family way: beastly time to fall sick. I have found, by good luck, a job for him here, which will pay some of his way: and in the meantime he is a pleasant guest, for he plays the flute with little sentiment but great perfection, and endears himself by his simplicity. To me, especially; I am so weary of finding people approach me with precaution, pick

their words, flatter, and twitter; but the muttons of the good God are not at all afraid of the lion. They take him as he comes, and he does not bite—at least not hard. This makes us a party of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, at table; deftly waited on by Mary Carter, a very nice Sydney girl, who served us at a boarding-house and has since come on—how long she will endure this exile is another story; and gauchely waited on by Faauma, the new left-handed wife of the famed Lafaele, a little creature in native dress of course and as beautiful as a bronze candlestick, so fine, clean and dainty in every limb; her arms and her little hips in particular masterpieces. The rest of the crew may be stated briefly, the great Henry Simelé, still to the front; King, of the yellow beard, rather a disappointment—I am inclined on this point to republican opinions: Ratke, a German cook, good—and Germanly bad, he don't make *my* kitchen; Paul, now working out his debts outdoor; Emma, a strange weird creature—I suspect (from her colour) a quarter white—widow of a white man, ugly, capable, a really good laundress; Java—yes, that is the name—they spell it Siava, but pronounce it, and explain it Java—her assistant, a creature I adore from her plain, wholesome, bread-and-butter beauty. An honest, almost ugly, bright, good-natured face; the rest (to my sense) merely exquisite. She comes steering into my room of a morning, like Mrs. Nickleby, with elaborate precaution; unlike her, noiseless. If I look up from my work, she is ready with an explosive smile. I generally don't, and wait to look at her as she stoops for the bellows,

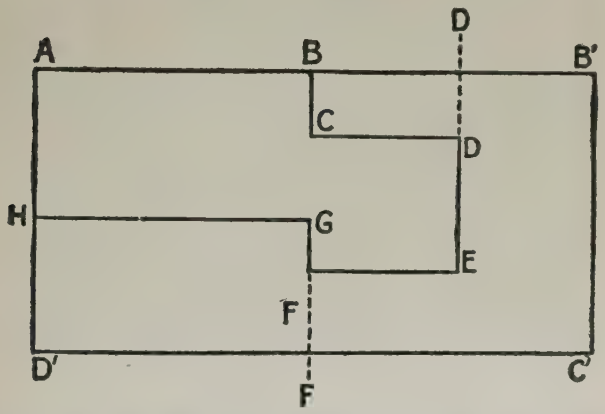
and trips tiptoe off again; a miracle of successful womanhood in every line. I am amused to find plain, healthy Java pass in my fancy so far before pretty young Faauma. I observed Lloyd the other day to say that Java must have been lovely 'when she was young'; and I thought it an odd word, of a woman in the height of health, not yet touched with fat, though (to be just) a little slack of bust.

Our party you know: Fanny, Lloyd, my mother, Belle, and 'the babe'—as we call him—Austin. We have now three instruments; Boehm flageolet, flute, and B♭ clarinet; and we expect in a few days our piano. This is a great pleasure to me; the band-mastering, the playing and all. As soon as I am done with this stage of a letter, I shall return, not being allowed to play, to band-master, being engaged in an attempt to arrange an air with effect for the three pipes. And I'll go now, by jabers.

*July 3rd.*—A long pause: occasioned, first by some days of hard work: next by a vile quinsey—if that be the way to spell it. But to-day I must write. For we have all kinds of larks on hand. The wars and rumors of wars begin to take consistency, insomuch that we have landed the weapons this morning, and inspected the premises with a view to defence. Of course it will come to nothing; but as in all stories of massacres, the one you don't prepare for is the one that comes off. All our natives think ill of the business; none of the whites do. According to our natives the demonstration threatened for to-day or to-morrow is one of vengeance on the whites—small wonder—and if that begins—where

will it stop? Anyway I don't mean to go down for nothing, if I can help it; and to amuse you I will tell you our plans.

There is the house, upper story. Our weak point is of course the sides AB, AH; so we propose to place half our garrison in the space HGFD and half in the opposite corner, BB′CD. We shall com-




municate through the interior, there is a water-tank in the angle C, my mother and Austin are to go in the loft. The holding of only these two corners and deserting the corner C′ is for economy and communication, two doors being in the sides GF and CD; so that any one in the corner C′ could only communicate or be reinforced by exposure. Besides we are short of mattresses. Garrison: R. L. S., Lloyd, Fanny, King, Ratke—doubtful, he may go—Emma, Mary, Belle; weapons: eight revolvers and a shotgun, and swords galore; but we're pretty far gone

when we come to the swords. It has been rather a lark arranging; but I find it a bore to write, and I doubt it will be cruel stale to read about, when all's over and done, as it will be ere this goes, I fancy: far more ere it reaches you.

*Date Unknown.*—Well, nothing as yet, though I don't swear by it yet. There has been a lot of trouble, and there still is a lot of doubt as to the future; and those who sit in the chief seats, who are all excellent, pleasant creatures, are not, perhaps, the most wise of mankind. They actually proposed to kidnap and deport Mataafa; a scheme which would have loosed the avalanche at once. But some human being interfered and choked off this pleasing scheme. You ask me in yours just received, what will become of us if it comes to a war? Well, if it is a war of the old sort, nothing. It will mean a little bother, and a great deal of theft, and more amusement. But if it comes to the massacre lark, I can only answer with the Bell of Old Bow. You are to understand that, in my reading of the native character, every day that passes is a solid gain. They put in the time public speaking; so wear out their energy, develop points of difference and exacerbate internal ill-feeling. Consequently, I feel less apprehension of difficulty now, by about a hundredfold. All that I stick to, is that if war begins, there are ten chances to one we shall have it bad. The natives have been scurvily used by all the white powers without exception; and they labour under the belief, of which they can't be cured, that they defeated Germany. This makes an awkward complication.

I was extremely vexed to hear you were ill again. I hope you are better. 'Tis a long time we have known each other now, to be sure. Well, well! you say you are sure to catch fever in the bush; so we do continually; but you are to conceive Samoa fever as the least formidable malady under heaven: implying only a day or so of slight headache and languor and ill humour, easily reduced by quinine or antipyrine. The hot fever I had was from over exertion and blood poisoning, no doubt, and irritation of the bladder; it went of its own accord and with rest. I have had since a bad quinsey which knocked me rather useless for about a week, but I stuck to my work, with great difficulty and small success.

*Date unknown.*—But it's fast day and July, and the rude inclement depth of winter, and the thermometer was 68 this morning and a few days ago it was 63, and we have all been perishing with cold. All still seems quiet. Your counterfeit presentments are all round us: the pastel over my bed, the Dew-Smith photograph over my door, and the 'celebrity' on Fanny's table. My room is now done, and looks very gay, and chromatic with its blue walls and my coloured lines of books.

## To Sidney Colvin

This is the first letter in which Stevenson expresses the opinion which had been forcing itself upon him, and which he felt it his duty in the following year to express publicly in letters to the Times, of the unwisdom of the government established under the treaty between the Three Powers and the incompetence of the officials appointed to carry it out.

[*Vailima*] *Sunday, Sept.* 5 (?), 1891

MY DEAR COLVIN,—Yours from Lochinver has just come. You ask me if I am ever homesick for the Highlands and the Isles. Conceive that for the last month I have been living there between 1786 and 1850, in my grandfather's diaries and letters. I *had* to take a rest; no use talking; so I put in a month over my *Lives of the Stevensons* with great pleasure and profit and some advance; one chapter and a part drafted. The whole promises well. Chapter I. Domestic Annals. Chapter II. The Northern Lights. Chapter III. The Bell Rock. Chapter IV. A Family of Boys. Chap. V. The Grandfather. VI. Alan Stevenson. VII. Thomas Stevenson. My materials for my great-grandfather are almost null; for my grandfather copious and excellent. Name, a puzzle. *A Scottish Family, A Family of Engineers, Northern Lights, The Engineers of the Northern Lights: A Family History.* Advise; but it will take long. Now, imagine if I have been homesick for Barrahead and Island Glass, and Kirkwall, and Cape Wrath, and the Wells of the Pentland Firth; I could have wept.

Now for politics. I am much less alarmed; I believe the *malo* (=*raj*, government) will collapse

and cease like an overlain infant, without a shot fired. They have now been months here on their big salaries—and Cedercrantz, whom I specially like as a man, has done nearly nothing, and the Baron, who is well-meaning, has done worse. They have these large salaries, and they have all the taxes; they have made scarce a foot of road; they have not given a single native a position—all to white men; they have scarce laid out a penny on Apia, and scarce a penny on the King; they have forgot they were in Samoa, or that such a thing as Samoans existed, and had eyes and some intelligence. The Chief Justice has refused to pay his customs! The President proposed to have an expensive house built for himself, while the King, his master, has none! I had stood aside, and been a loyal, and, above all, a silent subject, up to then; but now I snap my fingers at their *malo*. It is damned, and I'm damned glad of it. And this is not all. Last '*Wainiu*,' when I sent Fanny off to Fiji, I hear the wonderful news that the Chief Justice is going to Fiji and the Colonies to improve his mind. I showed my way of thought to his guest, Count Wachtmeister, whom I have sent to you with a letter—he will tell you all the news. Well, the Chief Justice stayed, but they said he was to leave yesterday. I had intended to go down, and see and warn him! But the President's house had come up in the meanwhile, and I let them go to their doom, which I am only anxious to see swiftly and (if it may be) bloodlessly fall.

Thus I have in a way withdrawn my unrewarded loyalty. Lloyd is down to-day with Moors to call

on Mataafa; the news of the excursion made a considerable row in Apia, and both the German and the English consuls besought Lloyd not to go. But he stuck to his purpose, and with my approval. It's a poor thing if people are to give up a pleasure party for a *malo* that has never done anything for us but draw taxes, and is going to go pop, and leave us at the mercy of the identical Mataafa, whom I have not visited for more than a year, and who is probably furious.

The sense of my helplessness here has been rather bitter; I feel it wretched to see this dance of folly and injustice and unconscious rapacity go forward from day to day, and to be impotent. I was not consulted—or only by one man, and that on particular points; I did not choose to volunteer advice till some pressing occasion; I have not even a vote, for I am not a member of the municipality.

What ails you, miserable man, to talk of saving material? I have a whole world in my head, a whole new society to work, but I am in no hurry; you will shortly make the acquaintance of the island of Ulufanua, on which I mean to lay several stories; the *Bloody Wedding*, possibly the *High Woods*—(O, it's so good, the *High Woods*, but the story is craziness; that's the trouble)—a political story, the *Labour Slave*, etc. Ulufanua is an imaginary island; the name is a beautiful Samoan word for the *top* of a forest; ulu=leaves or hair, fanua=land. The ground or country of the leaves. 'Ulufanua the isle of the sea,' read that verse dactylically and you get the beat; the u's are like our double oo; did ever you hear a prettier word?

I do not feel inclined to make a volume of Essays,[1] but if I did, and perhaps the idea is good—and any idea is better than the *South Seas*—here would be my choice of the Scribner articles: *Dreams*, *Beggars*, *Lantern-Bearers*, *Random Memories*. There was a paper called the *Old Pacific Capital* in Fraser, in Tulloch's time, which had merit; there were two on Fontainebleau in the Magazine of Art in Henley's time. I have no idea if they're any good; then there's the *Emigrant Train*. *Pulvis et Umbra* is in a different key, and wouldn't hang on with the rest.

I have just interrupted my letter and read through the chapter of the *High Woods* that is written, a chapter and a bit, some sixteen pages, really very fetching, but what do you wish? the story is so wilful, so steep, so silly—it's a hallucination I have outlived, and yet I never did a better piece of work, horrid, and pleasing, and extraordinarily *true*; it's sixteen pages of the South Seas; their essence. What am I to do? Lose this little gem—for I'll be bold, and that's what I think it—or go on with the rest, which I don't believe in, and don't like, and which can never make aught but a silly yarn? Make another end to it? Ah, yes, but that's not the way I write; the whole tale is implied; I never use an effect, when I can help it, unless it prepares the effects that are to follow; that's what a story consists in. To make another end, that is to make the beginning all wrong. The dénouement of a long

[1] In reply to a suggestion which ultimately took effect in the shape of the volume called *Across the Plains* (Chatto & Windus, 1892).

story is nothing; it is just a 'full close,' which you may approach and accompany as you please—it is a coda, not an essential member in the rhythm; but the body and end of a short story is bone of the bone and blood of the blood of the beginning. Well, I shall end by finishing it against my judgment; that fragment is my Delilah. Golly, it's good. I am not shining by modesty; but I do just love the colour and movement of that piece so far as it goes.

I was surprised to hear of your fishing. And you saw the *Pharos*,[1] thrice fortunate man; I wish I dared go home, I would ask the Commissioners to take me round for old sake's sake, and see all my family pictures once more from the Mull of Galloway to Unst. However, all is arranged for our meeting in Ceylon, except the date and the blooming pounds. I have heard of an exquisite hotel in the country, airy, large rooms, good cookery, not dear; we shall have a couple of months there, if we can make it out, and converse or—as my grandfather always said—'commune.' 'Communings with Mr. Kennedy as to Lighthouse Repairs.' He was a fine old fellow, but a droll.

*Evening.*—Lloyd has returned. Peace and war were played before his eyes at heads or tails. A German was stopped with levelled guns; he raised his whip; had it fallen, we might have been now in war. Excuses were made by Mataafa himself. Doubtless the thing was done—I mean the stop-

[1] The steam-yacht of the Commissioners of Northern Lights, on which he had been accustomed as a lad to accompany his father on the official trips of inspection round the coast.

ping of the German—a little to show off before Lloyd. Meanwhile —— was up here, telling how the Chief Justice was really gone for five or eight weeks, and begging me to write to the Times and denounce the state of affairs; many strong reasons he advanced; and Lloyd and I have been since his arrival and ——'s departure, near half an hour, debating what should be done. Cedercrantz is gone; it is not my fault; he knows my views on that point —alone of all points;—he leaves me with my mouth sealed. Yet this is a nice thing that because he is guilty of a fresh offence—his flight—the mouth of the only possible influential witness should be closed? I do not like this argument. I look like a cad, if I do in the man's absence what I could have done in a more manly manner in his presence. True; but why did he go? It is his last sin. And I, who like the man extremely—that is the word—I love his society—he is intelligent, pleasant, even witty, a gentleman—and you know how that attaches—I loathe to seem to play a base part; but the poor natives—who are like other folk, false enough, lazy enough, not heroes, not saints—ordinary men damnably misused—are they to suffer because I like Cedercrantz, and Cedercrantz has cut his lucky? This is a little tragedy, observe well—a tragedy! I may be right, I may be wrong in my judgment, but I am in treaty with my honour. I know not how it will seem tomorrow. Lloyd thought the barrier of honour insurmountable, and it is an ugly obstacle. He (Cedercrantz) will likely meet my wife three days from now, may travel back with her, will be charming if he

does; suppose this, and suppose him to arrive and find that I have sprung a mine—or the nearest approach to it I could find—behind his back? My position is pretty. Yes, I am an aristocrat. I have the old petty, personal view of honour? I should blush till I die if I do this; yet it is on the cards that I may do it. So much I have written you in bed, as a man writes, or talks, in a *bittre Wahl*. Now I shall sleep, and see if I am more clear. I will consult the missionaries at least—I place some reliance in M. also—or I should if he were not a partisan; but a partisan he is. There's a pity. To sleep! A fund of wisdom in the prostrate body and the fed brain. Kindly observe R. L. S. in the talons of politics! 'Tis funny—'tis sad. Nobody but these cursed idiots could have so driven me; I cannot bear idiots.

My dear Colvin, I must go to sleep; it is long past ten—a dreadful hour for me. And here am I lingering (so I feel) in the dining-room at the Monument, talking to you across the table, both on our feet, and only the two stairs to mount, and get to bed, and sleep, and be waked by dear old George—to whom I wish my kindest remembrances—next morning. I look round, and there is my blue room, and my long lines of shelves, and the door gaping on a moonless night, and no word of S. C. but his twa portraits on the wall. Good-bye, my dear fellow, and good-night. Queer place the world!

*Monday.*—No clearness of mind with the morning; I have no guess what I should do. 'Tis easy to say that the public duty should brush aside these

little considerations of personal dignity; so it is that politicians begin, and in a month you find them rat and flatter and intrigue with brows of brass. I am rather of the old view, that a man's first duty is to these little laws; the big he does not, he never will, understand; I may be wrong about the Chief Justice and the Baron and the state of Samoa; I cannot be wrong about the vile attitude I put myself in if I blow the gaff on Cedercrantz behind his back.

*Tuesday.*—One word more about the *South Seas*, in answer to a question I observe I have forgotten to answer. The Tahiti part has never turned up, because it has never been written. As for telling you where I went or when, or anything about Honolulu, I would rather die; that is fair and plain. How can anybody care when or how I left Honolulu? A man of upwards of forty cannot waste his time in communicating matter of that indifference. The letters, it appears, are tedious; they would be more tedious still if I wasted my time upon such infantile and sucking-bottle details. If ever I put in any such detail, it is because it leads into something or serves as a transition. To tell it for its own sake, never! The mistake is all through that I have told too much; I had not sufficient confidence in the reader, and have overfed him; and here are you anxious to learn how I—O Colvin! Suppose it had made a book, all such information is given to one glance of an eye by a map with a little dotted line upon it. But let us forget this unfortunate affair.

*Wednesday.*—Yesterday I went down to consult Clarke, who took the view of delay. Has he changed

his mind already? I wonder: here at least is the news. Some little while back some men of Manono —what is Manono?—a Samoan rotten borough, a small isle of huge political importance, heaven knows why, where a handful of chiefs make half the trouble in the country. Some men of Manono (which is strong Mataafa) burned down the houses and destroyed the crops of some Malietoa neighbours. The President went there the other day and landed alone on the island, which (to give him his due) was plucky. Moreover, he succeeded in persuading the folks to come up and be judged on a particular day in Apia. That day they did not come; but did come the next, and, to their vast surprise, were given six months' imprisonment and clapped in gaol. Those who had accompanied them cried to them on the streets as they were marched to prison, 'Shall we rescue you?' The condemned, marching in the hands of thirty men with loaded rifles, cried out 'No'! And the trick was done. But it was ardently believed a rescue would be attempted; the gaol was laid about with armed men day and night; but there was some question of their loyalty, and the commandant of the forces, a very nice young beardless Swede, became nervous, and conceived a plan. How if he should put dynamite under the gaol, and in case of an attempted rescue blow up prison and all? He went to the President, who agreed; he went to the American man-of-war for the dynamite and machine, was refused, and got it at last from the Wreckers. The thing began to leak out, and there arose a muttering in town. People had no fancy for ama-

teur explosions, for one thing. For another, it did not exactly appear that it was legal; the men had been condemned to six months' prison, which they were peaceably undergoing; they had not been condemned to death. And lastly, it seemed a somewhat advanced example of civilisation to set before barbarians. The mutter in short became a storm, and yesterday, while I was down, a cutter was chartered, and the prisoners were suddenly banished to the Tokelaus. Who has changed the sentence? We are going to stir in the dynamite matter; we do not want the natives to fancy us consenting to such an outrage.

Fanny has returned from her trip, and on the whole looks better. The *High Woods* are under way, and their name is now the *Beach of Falesá*, and the yarn is cured. I have about thirty pages of it done; it will be fifty to seventy I suppose. No supernatural trick at all; and escaped out of it quite easily; can't think why I was so stupid for so long. Mighty glad to have Fanny back to this 'Hell of the South Seas,' as the German Captain called it. What will Cedercrantz think when he comes back? To do him justice, had be been here, this Manono hash would not have been.

Here is a pretty thing. When Fanny was in Fiji all the Samoa and Tokelau folks were agog about our 'flash' house; but the whites had never heard of it.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON,
Author of *The Beach of Falesá*

### To Sidney Colvin

[*Vailima*], *Sept.* 28, 1891

MY DEAR COLVIN,—Since I last laid down my pen, I have written and rewritten *The Beach of Falesá*; something like sixty thousand words of sterling domestic fiction (the story, you will understand, is only half that length); and now I don't want to write any more again for ever, or feel so; and I've got to overhaul it once again to my sorrow. I was all yesterday revising, and found a lot of slacknesses and (what is worse in this kind of thing) some literaryisms. One of the puzzles is this: It is a first person story—a trader telling his own adventure in an island. When I began I allowed myself a few liberties, because I was afraid of the end; now the end proved quite easy, and could be done in the pace; so the beginning remains about a quarter tone out (in places); but I have rather decided to let it stay so. The problem is always delicate; it is the only thing that worries me in first person tales, which otherwise (quo' Alan) 'set better wi' my genius.' There is a vast deal of fact in the story, and some pretty good comedy. It is the first realistic South Sea story; I mean with real South Sea character and details of life. Everybody else who has tried, that I have seen, got carried away by the romance, and ended in a kind of sugar candy sham epic, and the whole effect was lost—there was no etching, no human grin, consequently no conviction. Now I have got the smell and look of the thing a good deal. You will know more about the South Seas after you

have read my little tale than if you had read a library. As to whether any one else will read it, I have no guess. I am in an off time, but there is just the possibility it might make a hit; for the yarn is good and melodramatic, and there is quite a love affair—for me; and Mr. Wiltshire (the narrator) is a huge lark, though I say it. But there is always the exotic question, and everything, the life, the place, the dialects—trader's talk, which is a strange conglomerate of literary expressions and English and American slang, and Beach de Mar, or native English,—the very trades and hopes and fears of the characters, are all novel, and may be found unwelcome to that great, hulking, bullering whale, the public.

Since I wrote, I have been likewise drawing up a document to send in to the President; it has been dreadfully delayed, not by me, but to-day they swear it will be sent in. A list of questions about the dynamite report are herein laid before him, and considerations suggested why he should answer.

*October 5th.*—Ever since my last snatch I have been much chivied about over the President business; his answer has come, and is an evasion accompanied with schoolboy insolence, and we are going to try to answer it. I drew my answer and took it down yesterday; but one of the signatories wants another paragraph added, which I have not yet been able to draw, and as to the wisdom of which I am not yet convinced.

*Next day, Oct. 7th the right day.*—We are all in rather a muddled state with our President affair. I do loathe politics, but at the same time, I cannot stand

by and have the natives blown in the air treacherously with dynamite. They are still quiet; how long this may continue I do not know, though of course by mere prescription the Government is strengthened, and is probably insured till the next taxes fall due. But the unpopularity of the whites is growing. My native overseer, the great Henry Simelé, announced to-day that he was 'weary of whites upon the beach. All too proud,' said this veracious witness. One of the proud ones had threatened yesterday to cut off his head with a bush knife! These are 'native outrages,' honour bright, and setting theft aside, in which the natives are active, this is the main stream of irritation. The natives are generally courtly, far from always civil, but really gentle, and with a strong sense of honour of their own, and certainly quite as much civilised as our dynamiting President.

We shall be delighted to see Kipling.[1] I go to bed usually about half-past eight, and my lamp is out before ten; I breakfast at six. We may say roughly we have no soda water on the island, and just now truthfully no whisky. I *have* heard the chimes at midnight; now no more, I guess. *But* —Fanny and I, as soon as we can get coins for it, are coming to Europe, not to England: I am thinking of Royat. Bar wars. If not, perhaps the Apennines might give us a mountain refuge for two months or three in summer. How is that for high? But the money must be all in hand first.

[1] Mr. Rudyard Kipling was at this time planning a trip to Samoa, but the plan was unfortunately not carried out, and he and Stevenson never met.

*October 13th.*—How am I to describe my life these last few days? I have been wholly swallowed up in politics, a wretched business, with fine elements of farce in it too, which repay a man in passing, involving many dark and many moonlight rides, secret counsels which are at once divulged, sealed letters which are read aloud in confidence to the neighbours, and a mass of fudge and fun, which would have driven me crazy ten years ago, and now makes me smile.

On Friday, Henry came and told us he must leave and go to 'my poor old family in Savaii'; why? I do not quite know—but, I suspect, to be tattooed—if so, then probably to be married, and we shall see him no more. I told him he must do what he thought his duty; we had him to lunch, drank his health, and he and I rode down about twelve. When I got down, I sent my horse back to help bring down the family later. My own afternoon was cut out for me; my last draft for the President had been objected to by some of the signatories. I stood out, and one of our small number accordingly refused to sign. Him I had to go and persuade, which went off very well after the first hottish moments; you have no idea how stolid my temper is now. By about five the thing was done; and we sat down to dinner at the Chinaman's—the Verrey or Doyen of Apia—Gurr and I at each end as hosts; Gurr's wife—Fanua, late maid of the village; her (adopted) father and mother, Seumanu and Faatulia, Fanny, Belle, Lloyd, Austin, and Henry Simelé, his last appearance. Henry was in a kilt of grey shawl, with a blue jacket, white

shirt, and black necktie, and looked like a dark genteel guest in a Highland shooting-box. Seumanu (opposite Fanny, next G.) is chief of Apia, a rather big gun in this place, looking like a large, fatted, military Englishman, bar the colour. Faatulia, next me, is a bigger chief than her husband. Henry is a chief too—his chief name, Iiga (Ee-eeng-a), he has not yet 'taken' because of his youth. We were in fine society, and had a pleasant meal-time, with lots of fun. Then to the Opera—I beg your pardon, I mean the Circus. We occupied the first row in the reserved seats, and there in the row behind were all our friends—Captain Foss and his Captain-Lieutenant, three of the American officers, very nice fellows, the Dr., etc., so we made a fine show of what an embittered correspondent of the local paper called 'the shoddy aristocracy of Apia'; and you should have seen how we carried on, and how I clapped, and Captain Foss hollered '*wunderschön!*' and threw himself forward in his seat, and how we all in fact enjoyed ourselves like school-children, Austin not a shade more than his neighbours. Then the Circus broke up, and the party went home, but I stayed down, having business on the morrow.

Yesterday, October 12th, great news reaches me, and Lloyd and I, with the mail just coming in, must leave all, saddle, and ride down. True enough, the President had resigned! Sought to resign his presidency of the council, and keep his advisership to the King; given way to the consuls' objections and resigned all—then fell out with them about the disposition of the funds, and was now trying to resign

from his resignation! Sad little President, so trim to look at, and I believe so kind to his little wife! Not only so, but I meet Dunnet on the beach. Dunnet calls me in consultation, and we make with infinite difficulty a draft of a petition to the King. . . . Then to dinner at Moors's, a very merry meal, interrupted before it was over by the arrival of the committee. Slight sketch of procedure agreed upon, self appointed spokesman, and the deputation sets off. Walk all through Matafele, all along Mulinuu come to the King's house; he has verbally refused to see us in answer to our letter, swearing he is gasegase (chief sickness, not common man's), and indeed we see him inside in bed. It is a miserable low house, better houses by the dozen in the little hamlet (Tanugamanono) of bushmen on our way to Vailima; and the President's house in process of erection just opposite! We are told to return tomorrow; I refuse; and at last we are very sourly received, sit on the mats, and I open out, through a very poor interpreter, and sometimes hampered by unacceptable counsels from my backers. I can speak fairly well in a plain way now. C. asked me to write out my harangue for him this morning; I have done so, and couldn't get it near as good. I suppose (talking and interpreting) I was twenty minutes or half an hour on the deck; then his majesty replied in the dying whisper of a big chief; a few words of rejoinder (approving), and the deputation withdrew, rather well satisfied.

A few days ago this intervention would have been a deportable offence; not now, I bet; I would like

them to try. A little way back along Mulinuu, Mrs. Gurr met us with her husband's horse; and he and she and Lloyd and I rode back in a heavenly moonlight. Here ends a chapter in the life of an island politician! Catch me at it again; 'tis easy to go in, but it is not a pleasant trade. I have had a good team, as good as I could get on the beach; but what trouble even so, and what fresh troubles shaping. But I have on the whole carried all my points; I believe all but one, and on that (which did not concern me) I had no right to interfere. I am sure you would be amazed if you knew what a good hand I am at keeping my temper, talking people over, and giving reasons which are not my reasons, but calculated for the meridian of the particular objection; so soon does falsehood await the politician in his whirling path.

## To Henry James

Stevenson had again been reading Mr. James's *Lesson of the Master*; Adela Chart is the heroine of the second story in that collection, called *The Marriage*.

[*Vailima, October* 1891]

MY DEAR HENRY JAMES,—From this perturbed and hunted being expect but a line, and that line shall be but a whoop for Adela. O she's delicious, delicious; I could live and die with Adela—die, rather the better of the two; you never did a straighter thing, and never will.

*David Balfour*, second part of *Kidnapped*, is on the stocks at last; and is not bad, I think. As for *The Wrecker*, it's a machine, you know—don't expect aught else—a machine, and a police machine;

but I believe the end is one of the most genuine butcheries in literature; and we point to our machine with a modest pride, as the only police machine without a villain. Our criminals are a most pleasing crew, and leave the dock with scarce a stain upon their character.

What a different line of country to be trying to draw Adela, and trying to write the last four chapters of *The Wrecker!* Heavens, it's like two centuries; and ours is such rude, transpontine business, aiming only at a certain fervour of conviction and sense of energy and violence in the men; and yours is so neat and bright and of so exquisite a surface! Seems dreadful to send such a book to such an author; but your name is on the list. And we do modestly ask you to consider the chapters on the *Norah Creina* with the study of Captain Nares, and the forementioned last four, with their brutality of substance and the curious (and perhaps unsound) technical manœuvre of running the story together to a point as we go along, the narrative becoming more succinct and the details fining off with every page.—Sworn affidavit of

R. L. S.

*No person now alive has beaten Adela: I adore Adela and her maker. Sic subscrib.*

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

A Sublime Poem to follow.

Adela, Adela, Adela Chart,
What have you done to my elderly heart?
Of all the ladies of paper and ink
I count you the paragon, call you the pink.

The word of your brother depicts you in part:
'You raving maniac!' Adela Chart;
But in all the asylums that cumber the ground,
So delightful a maniac was ne'er to be found.

I pore on you, dote on you, clasp you to heart,
I laud, love, and laugh at you, Adela Chart,
And thank my dear maker the while I admire
That I can be neither your husband nor sire.

Your husband's, your sire's were a difficult part;
You're a byway to suicide, Adela Chart;
But to read of, depicted by exquisite James,
O, sure you're the flower and quintessence of dames.

R. L. S.

*Eructavit cor meum*

My heart was inditing a goodly matter about Adela Chart.

Though oft I've been touched by the volatile dart,
To none have I grovelled but Adela Chart,
There are passable ladies, no question, in art—
But where is the marrow of Adela Chart?
I dreamed that to Tyburn I passed in the cart—
I dreamed I was married to Adela Chart:
From the first I awoke with a palpable start,
The second dumbfoundered me, Adela Chart!

Another verse bursts from me, you see; no end to the violence of the Muse.

## To E. L. Burlingame

[*Vailima*], *October 8th*, 1891

MY DEAR BURLINGAME,—All right, you shall have the *Tales of my Grandfather* soon, but I guess we'll try and finish off *The Wrecker* first. *À propos* of

whom, please send some advanced sheets to Cassell's—away ahead of you—so that they may get a dummy out.

Do you wish to illustrate *My Grandfather?* He mentions as excellent a portrait of Scott by Basil Hall's brother. I don't think I ever saw this engraved; would it not, if you could get track of it, prove a taking embellishment? I suggest this for your consideration and inquiry. A new portrait of Scott strikes me as good. There is a hard, tough, constipated old portrait of my grandfather hanging in my aunt's house, Mrs. Alan Stevenson, 16 St. Leonard's Terrace, Chelsea, which has never been engraved—the better portrait, Joseph's bust, has been reproduced, I believe, twice—and which, I am sure, my aunt would let you have a copy of. The plate could be of use for the book when we get so far, and thus to place it in the Magazine might be an actual saving.

I am swallowed up in politics for the first, I hope for the last, time in my sublunary career. It is a painful, thankless trade; but one thing that came up I could not pass in silence. Much drafting, addressing, deputationising has eaten up all my time, and again (to my contrition) I leave you Wreckerless. As soon as the mail leaves I tackle it straight.—Yours very sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## To E. L. Burlingame

[*Vailima, October* 1891]

MY DEAR BURLINGAME,—The time draws nigh, the mail is near due, and I snatch a moment of collapse so that you may have at least some sort of a scratch of note along with the end of *The Wrecker*. Hurray! which I mean to go herewith. It has taken me a devil of a pull, but I think it's going to be ready. If I did not know you were on the stretch waiting for it and trembling for your illustrations, I would keep it for another finish; but things being as they are, I will let it go the best way I can get it. I am now within two pages of the end of Chapter XXV., which is the last chapter, the end with its gathering up of loose threads, being the dedication to Low, and addressed to him; this is my last and best expedient for the knotting up of these loose cards. 'Tis possible I may not get that finished in time, in which case you'll receive only Chapters XXII. to XXV. by this mail, which is all that can be required for illustration.

I wish you would send me *Memoirs of Baron Marbot* (French); *Introduction to the Study of the History of Language*, Strong, Logeman & Wheeler; *Principles of Psychology*, William James; Morris & Magnusson's *Saga Library*, any volumes that are out; George Meredith's *One of our Conquerors*; *Là Bas*,

by Huysmans (French); O'Connor Morris's *Great Commanders of Modern Times*; *Life's Handicap*, by Kipling; of Taine's *Origines de la France Contemporaine*, I have only as far as *la Révolution*, vol. iii.; if another volume is out, please add that. There is for a book-box.

I hope you will like the end; I think it is rather strong meat. I have got into such a deliberate, dilatory, expansive turn, that the effort to compress this last yarn was unwelcome; but the longest yarn has to come to an end some time. Please look it over for carelessnesses, and tell me if it had any effect upon your jaded editorial mind. I'll see if ever I have time to add more.

I add to my book-box list Adams' *Historical Essays*; the Plays of A. W. Pinero—all that have appeared, and send me the rest in course as they do appear; *Noughts and Crosses* by Q.; Robertson's *Scotland under her Early Kings*.

*Sunday.*—The deed is done, didst thou not hear a noise? 'The end' has been written to this endless yarn, and I am once more a free man. What will he do with it?

## To Sidney Colvin

[*Vailima*] *Monday, October 24th*

MY DEAR CARTHEW,[1]—See what I have written, but it's Colvin I'm after—I have written two chapters, about thirty pages of *Wrecker* since the mail left,

[1] Readers of *The Wrecker* will not need to be reminded that this is the name of the personage on whom the mystery in that story hinges.

which must be my excuse, and the bother I've had with it is not to be imagined; you might have seen me the day before yesterday weighing British sov.'s and Chili dollars to arrange my treasure chest. And there was such a calculation, not for that only, but for the ship's position and distances when—but I am not going to tell you the yarn—and then, as my arithmetic is particularly lax, Lloyd had to go over all my calculations; and then, as I had changed the amount of money, he had to go over all *his* as to the amount of the lay; and altogether, a bank could be run with less effusion of figures than it took to shore up a single chapter of a measly yarn. However, it's done, and I have but one more, or at the outside two, to do, and I am Free! and can do any damn thing I like.

Before falling on politics, I shall give you my day: Awoke somewhere about the first peep of day, came gradually to, and had a turn on the verandah before 5.55, when 'the child' (an enormous Wallis Islander) brings me an orange; at 6, breakfast; 6.10, to work; which lasts till, at 10.30, Austin comes for his history lecture; this is rather dispiriting, but education must be gone about in faith—and charity, both of which pretty nigh failed me to-day about (of all things) Carthage; 11, luncheon; after luncheon in my mother's room, I read Chapter XXIII. of *The Wrecker*, then Belle, Lloyd, and I go up and make music furiously till about 2 (I suppose), when I turn into work again till 4; fool from 4 to half-past, tired out and waiting for the bath hour; 4.30, bath; 4.40, eat two heavenly mangoes on the verandah, and see

the boys arrive with the pack-horses; 5, dinner; smoke, chat on verandah, then hand of cards, and at last at 8 come up to my room with a pint of beer and a hard biscuit, which I am now consuming, and as soon as they are consumed I shall turn in.

Such are the innocent days of this ancient and outworn sportsman; to-day there was no weeding, usually there is however, edged in somewhere. My books for the moment are a crib to Phædo, and the second book of Montaigne; and a little while back I was reading Frederic Harrison, *Choice of Books*, etc.—very good indeed, a great deal of sense and knowledge in the volume, and some very true stuff, *contra* Carlyle, about the eighteenth century. A hideous idea came over me that perhaps Harrison is now getting *old*. Perhaps you are. Perhaps I am. Oh, this infidelity must be stared firmly down. I am about twenty-three—say twenty-eight; you about thirty, or by'r lady, thirty-four; and as Harrison belongs to the same generation, there is no good bothering about him.

Here has just been a fine alert; I gave my wife a dose of chlorodyne. 'Something wrong,' says she. 'Nonsense,' said I. 'Embrocation,' said she. I smelt it, and—it smelt very funny. 'I think it's just gone bad, and to-morrow will tell.' Proved to be so.

*Wednesday.*—History of Tuesday.—Woke at usual time, very little work, for I was tired, and had a job for the evening—to write parts for a new instrument, a violin. Lunch, chat, and up to my place to practise; but there was no practising for me—my

flageolet was gone wrong, and I had to take it all to pieces, clean it, and put it up again. As this is a most intricate job—the thing dissolves into seventeen separate members, most of these have to be fitted on their individual springs as fine as needles, and sometimes two at once with the springs shoving different ways—it took me till two. Then Lloyd and I rode forth on our errands; first to Motootua, where we had a really instructive conversation on weeds and grasses. Thence down to Apia, where we bought a fresh bottle of chlorodyne and conversed on politics.

My visit to the King, which I thought at the time a particularly nugatory and even schoolboy step, and only consented to because I had held the reins so tight over my little band before, has raised a deuce of a row—new proclamation, no one is to interview the sacred puppet without consuls' permission, two days' notice, and an approved interpreter—read (I suppose) spy. Then back; I should have said I was trying the new horse; a tallish piebald, bought from the circus; he proved steady and safe, but in very bad condition, and not so much the wild Arab steed of the desert as had been supposed. The height of his back, after commodious Jack, astonished me, and I had a great consciousness of exercise and florid action, as I posted to his long, emphatic trot. We had to ride back easy; even so he was hot and blown; and when we set a boy to lead him to and fro, our last character for sanity perished. We returned just neat for dinner; and in the evening our violinist arrived, a young lady, no great virtuoso

truly, but plucky, industrious, and a good reader; and we played five pieces with huge amusement, and broke up at nine. This morning I have read a splendid piece of Montaigne, written this page of letter, and now turn to the *Wrecker*.

*Wednesday*—November 16th or 17th—and I am ashamed to say mail day. The *Wrecker* is finished, that is the best of my news; it goes by this mail to Scribner's; and I honestly think it a good yarn on the whole and of its measly kind. The part that is genuinely good is Nares, the American sailor; that is a genuine figure; had there been more Nares it would have been a better book; but of course it didn't set up to be a book, only a long tough yarn with some pictures of the manners of to-day in the greater world —not the shoddy sham world of cities, clubs, and colleges, but the world where men still live a man's life. The worst of my news is the influenza; Apia is devastate; the shops closed, a ball put off, etc. As yet we have not had it at Vailima, and, who knows? we may escape. None of us go down, but of course the boys come and go.

Your letter had the most wonderful 'I told you so' I ever heard in the course of my life. Why, you madman, I wouldn't change my present installation for any post, dignity, honour, or advantage conceivable to me. It fills the bill; I have the loveliest time. And as for wars and rumours of wars, you surely know enough of me to be aware that I like that also a thousand times better than decrepit peace in Middlesex? I do not quite like politics; I am too aristocratic, I fear, for that. God knows I don't

care who I chum with; perhaps like sailors best; but to go round and sue and sneak to keep a crowd together—never. My imagination, which is not the least damped by the idea of having my head cut off in the bush, recoils aghast from the idea of a life like Gladstone's, and the shadow of the newspaper chills me to the bone. Hence my late eruption was interesting, but not what I like. All else suits me in this (killed a mosquito) Ai abode.

About politics. A determination was come to by the President that he had been an idiot; emissaries came to Gurr and me to kiss and be friends. My man proposed I should have a personal interview; I said it was quite useless, I had nothing to say; I had offered him the chance to inform me, had pressed it on him, and had been very unpleasantly received, and now 'Time was.' Then it was decided that I was to be made a culprit against Germany; the German Captain—a delightful fellow and our constant visitor—wrote to say that as 'a German officer' he could not come even to say farewell. We all wrote back in the most friendly spirit, telling him (politely) that some of these days he would be sorry, and we should be delighted to see our friend again. Since then I have seen no German shadow.

Mataafa has been proclaimed a rebel; the President did this act, and then resigned. By singular good fortune, Mataafa has not yet moved; no thanks to our idiot governors. They have shot their bolt; they have made a rebel of the only man (*to their own knowledge, on the report of their own spy*) who held the rebel party in check; and having thus called on

war to fall, they can do no more, sit equally 'expertes' of *vis* and counsel, regarding their handiwork. It is always a cry with these folks that he (Mataafa) had no ammunition. I always said it would be found; and we know of five boat-loads that have found their way to Maile already. Where there are traders, there will be ammunition; aphorism by R. L. S.

Now what am I to do next?

Lives of the Stevensons? *Historia Samoae?* A History for Children? Fiction? I have had two hard months at fiction; I want a change. Stevensons? I am expecting some more material; perhaps better wait. Samoa? rather tempting; might be useful to the islands—and to me; for it will be written in admirable temper; I have never agreed with any party, and see merits and excuses in all; should do it (if I did) very slackly and easily, as if half in conversation. History for Children? This flows from my lessons to Austin; no book is any good. The best I have seen is Freeman's *Old English History*; but his style is so rasping, and a child can learn more, if he's clever. I found my sketch of general Aryan history, given in conversation, to have been practically correct—at least what I mean is, Freeman had very much the same stuff in his early chapters, only not so much, and I thought not so well placed; and the child remembered some of it. Now the difficulty is to give this general idea of main place, growth, and movement; it is needful to tack it on a yarn. Now Scotch is the only history I know; it is the only history reasonably represented in my li-

brary; it is a very good one for my purpose, owing to two civilisations having been face to face throughout—or rather Roman civilisation face to face with our ancient barbaric life and government, down to yesterday, to 1750 anyway. But the *Tales of a Grandfather* stand in my way; I am teaching them to Austin now, and they have all Scott's defects and all Scott's hopeless merit. I cannot compete with that; and yet, so far as regards teaching History, how he has missed his chances! I think I'll try; I really have some historic sense, I feel that in my bones. Then there's another thing. Scott never knew the Highlands; he was always a Borderer. He has missed that whole, long, strange, pathetic story of our savages, and, besides, his style is not very perspicuous to childhood. Gad, I think I'll have a flutter. Buridan's Ass! Whether to go, what to attack. Must go to other letters; shall add to this, if I have time.

## To W. Craibe Angus

*Vailima, Samoa, November* 1891

MY DEAR MR. ANGUS,—Herewith the invaluable sheets. They came months after your letter, and I trembled; but here they are, and I have scrawled my vile name on them, and 'thocht shame' as I did it. I am expecting the sheets of your catalogue, so that I may attack the preface. Please give me all the time you can. The sooner the better; you might even send me early proofs as they are sent out, to give me more incubation. I used to write as slow

as judgment; now I write rather fast; but I am still 'a slow study,' and sit a long while silent on my eggs. Unconscious thought, there is the only method: macerate your subject, let it boil slow, then take the lid off and look in—and there your stuff is, good or bad. But the journalist's method is the way to manufacture lies; it is will-worship—if you know the luminous quaker phrase; and the will is only to be brought in the field for study and again for revision. The essential part of work is not an act, it is a state.

I do not know why I write you this trash.

Many thanks for your handsome dedication. I have not yet had time to do more than glance at Mrs. Begg; it looks interesting.—Yours very truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## To Miss Annie H. Ide

*Vailima, Samoa* [*November* 1891]

MY DEAR LOUISA,—Your picture of the church, the photograph of yourself and your sister, and your very witty and pleasing letter, came all in a bundle, and made me feel I had my money's worth for that birthday. I am now, I must be, one of your nearest relatives; exactly what we are to each other, I do not know, I doubt if the case has ever happened before—your papa ought to know, and I don't believe he does; but I think I ought to call you in the meanwhile, and until we get the advice of counsel learned in the law, my name-daughter. Well, I was extremely pleased to see by the church that my name-daughter could draw; by the letter, that she was no

fool; and by the photograph, that she was a pretty girl, which hurts nothing. See how virtues are rewarded! My first idea of adopting you was entirely charitable; and here I find that I am quite proud of it, and of you, and that I chose just the kind of name-daughter I wanted. For I can draw too, or rather I mean to say I could before I forgot how; and I am very far from being a fool myself, however much I may look it; and I am as beautiful as the day, or at least I once hoped that perhaps I might be going to be. And so I might. So that you see we are well met, and peers on these important points. I am very glad also that you are older than your sister. So should I have been, if I had had one. So that the number of points and virtues which you have inherited from your name-father is already surprising.

I wish you would tell your father—not that I like to encourage my rival—that we have had a wonderful time here of late, and that they are having a cold day on Mulinuu, and the consuls are writing reports, and I am writing to the Times, and if we don't get rid of our friends this time I shall begin to despair of everything but my name-daughter.

You are quite wrong as to the effect of the birthday on your age. From the moment the deed was registered (as it was in the public press with every solemnity), the 13th of November became your own *and only* birthday, and you ceased to have been born on Christmas Day. Ask your father: I am sure he will tell you this is sound law. You are thus become a month and twelve days younger than you were,

but will go on growing older for the future in the regular and human manner from one 13th November to the next. The effect on me is more doubtful; I may, as you suggest, live for ever; I might, on the other hand, come to pieces like the one-horse shay at a moment's notice; doubtless the step was risky, but I do not the least regret that which enables me to sign myself your revered and delighted name-father,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## To CHARLES BAXTER

[*Vailima, November* 1891]

DEAR CHARLES,—[After dealing with some matters of business] I believe that's a'. By this time, I suppose you will have heard from McClure, and the *Beach of Falesá* will be decided on for better for worse. The end of *The Wrecker* goes by this mail, an awfae relief. I am now free and can do what I please. What do I please? I kenna. I'll bide a wee. There's a child's history in the wind; and there's my grandfather's life begun; and there's a hist[ry] of Samoa in the last four or five years begun—there's a kind of sense to this book; it may help the Samoans, it may help me, for I am bound on the altar here for anti-Germanism. Then there's *The Pearl Fisher* about a quarter done; and there's various short stories in various degrees of incompleteness. De'il, there's plenty grist; but the mill's unco slaw! To-morrow or next day, when the mail's through, I'll attack one or other, or maybe

something else. All these schemes begin to laugh at me, for the day's far through, and I believe the pen grows heavy. However, I believe *The Wrecker* is a good yarn of its poor sort, and it is certainly well nourished with facts; no realist can touch me there; for by this time I do begin to know something of life in the XIXth century, which no novelist either in France or England seems to know much of. You must have great larks over masonry. You're away up in the ranks now and (according to works that I have read) doubtless design assassinations. But I am an outsider; and I have a certain liking for a light unto my path which would deter me from joining the rank and file of so vast and dim a confraternity. At your altitude it becomes (of course) amusing and perhaps useful. Yes, I remember the L. J. R.[1] and the constitution, and my homily on Liberty, and yours on Reverence, which was never written—so I never knew what reverence was. I remember I wanted to write Justice also; but I forget who had the billet. My dear papa was in a devil of a taking; and I had to go and lunch at Ferrier's in a strangely begrutten state, which was *infra dig.* for a homilist on liberty. It was about four, I suppose, that we met in the Lothian Road,—had we the price of two bitters between us? questionable!

Your bookseller (I have lost his letter, I mean the maid has, arranging my room, and so have to send by you) wrote me a letter about Old Bailey Papers. Gosh, I near swarfed; dam'd, man, I near had dee'd o't. It's only yin or twa volumes I want;

[1] See vol. I, p. 56.

say 500 or 1000 pages of the stuff; and the worthy man (much doubting) proposed to bury me in volumes. Please allay his rage, and apologise that I have not written him direct. His note was civil and purposelike. And please send me a copy of Henley's *Book of Verses*; mine has disappeared.

R. L. S.

## To Sidney Colvin

*Nov. 25th*, 1891

MY DEAR COLVIN, MY DEAR COLVIN,—I wonder how often I'm going to write it. In spite of the loss of three days, as I have to tell, and a lot of weeding and cacao planting, I have finished since the mail left four chapters, forty-eight pages of my Samoa history. It is true that the first three had been a good deal drafted two years ago, but they had all to be written and re-written, and the fourth chapter is all new. Chapter I. Elements of Discord—Native. II. Elements of Discord—Foreign. III. The Success of Laupepa. IV. Brandeis. V. Will probably be called 'The Rise of Mataafa.' VI. *Furor Consularis*—a devil of a long chapter. VII. Stuebel the Pacificator. VIII. Government under the Treaty of Berlin. IX. Practical Suggestions. Say three-sixths of it are done, maybe more; by this mail five chapters should go, and that should be a good half of it; say sixty pages. And if you consider that I sent by last mail the end of *The Wrecker*, coming on for seventy or eighty pages, and the mail before that the entire tale of the *Beach of Falesá*, I do not think I can be accused of idleness. This is my season; I often work

six and seven, and sometimes eight hours; and the same day I am perhaps weeding or planting for an hour or two more—and I dare say you know what hard work weeding is—and it all agrees with me at this time of year—like—like idleness, if a man of my years could be idle.

My first visit to Apia was a shock to me; every second person the ghost of himself, and the place reeking with infection. But I have not got the thing yet, and hope to escape. This shows how much stronger I am; think of me flitting through a town of influenza patients seemingly unscathed. We are all on the cacao planting.

The next day my wife and I rode over to the German plantation, Vailele, whose manager is almost the only German left to speak to us. Seventy labourers down with influenza! It is a lovely ride, half-way down our mountain towards Apia, then turn to the right, ford the river, and three miles of solitary grass and cocoa palms, to where the sea beats and the wild wind blows unceasingly about the plantation house. On the way down Fanny said, 'Now what would you do if you saw Colvin coming up?'

Next day we rode down to Apia to make calls.

Yesterday the mail came, and the fat was in the fire.

*Nov. 29th* (?).—Book.[1] All right. I must say I like your order. And the papers are some of them

[1] *Across the Plains.* The papers specially referred to in the next lines are those written at Saranac Lake in the winter of 1887–88, including *A Letter to a Young Gentleman, Pulvis et Umbra, A Christmas Sermon.*

up to dick and, no mistake. I agree with you the lights seem a little turned down. The truth is, I was far through (if you understand Scots), and came none too soon to the South Seas, where I was to recover peace of body and mind. No man but myself knew all my bitterness in those days. Remember that, the next time you think I regret my exile. And however low the lights are, the stuff is true, and I believe the more effective; after all, what I wish to fight is the best fought by a rather cheerless presentation of the truth. The world must return some day to the word duty, and be done with the word reward. There are no rewards, and plenty duties. And the sooner a man sees that and acts upon it like a gentleman or a fine old barbarian, the better for himself.

There is my usual puzzle about publishers. Chatto ought to have it, as he has all the other essays; these all belong to me, and Chatto publishes on terms. Longman has forgotten the terms we are on; let him look up our first correspondence, and he will see I reserved explicitly, as was my habit, the right to republish as I choose. Had the same arrangement with Henley, Magazine of Art, and with Tulloch, Fraser's. —For any necessary note or preface, it would be a real service if you would undertake the duty yourself. I should love a preface by you, as short or as long as you choose, three sentences, thirty pages, the thing I should like is your name. And the excuse of my great distance seems sufficient. I shall return with this the sheets corrected as far as I have them; the rest I will leave, if you will, to you entirely; let it be your book, and disclaim what you

dislike in the preface. You can say it was at my eager prayer. I should say I am the less willing to pass Chatto over, because he behaved the other day in a very handsome manner. He asked leave to reprint *Damien*; I gave it to him as a present, explaining I could receive no emolument for a personal attack. And he took out my share of profits, and sent them in my name to the Leper Fund. I could not bear after that to take from him any of that class of books which I have always given him. Tell him the same terms will do. Clark to print, uniform with the others.

I have lost all the days since this letter began rehandling Chapter IV. of the Samoa racket. I do not go in for literature; address myself to sensible people rather than to sensitive. And, indeed, it is a kind of journalism, I have no right to dally; if it is to help, it must come soon. In two months from now it shall be done, and should be published in the course of March. I propose Cassell gets it. I am going to call it *A Footnote to History: Eight Years of Trouble in Samoa*, I believe. I recoil from serious names; they seem so much too pretentious for a pamphlet. It will be about the size of *Treasure Island*, I believe. Of course, as you now know, my case of conscience cleared itself off, and I began my intervention directly to one of the parties. The other, the Chief Justice, I am to inform of my book the first occasion. God knows if the book will do any good—or harm; but I judge it right to try. There is one man's life certainly involved; and it may be all our lives. I must not stand and slouch, but do my best as best

I can. But you may conceive the difficulty of a history extending to the present week, at least, and where almost all the actors upon all sides are of my personal acquaintance. The only way is to judge slowly, and write boldly, and leave the issue to fate. . . . I am far indeed from wishing to confine myself to creative work; that is a loss, the other repairs; the one chance for a man, and, above all, for one who grows elderly, ahem, is to vary drainage and repair. That is the one thing I understand—the cultivation of the shallow *solum* of my brain. But I would rather, from soon on, be released from the obligation to write. In five or six years this plantation—suppose it and us still to exist—should pretty well support us and pay wages; not before, and already the six years seem long to me. If literature were but a pastime!

I have interrupted myself to write the necessary notification to the Chief Justice.

I see in looking up Longman's letter that it was as usual the letter of an obliging gentleman; so do not trouble him with my reminder. I wish all my publishers were not so nice. And I have a fourth and a fifth baying at my heels; but for these, of course, they must go wanting.

*Dec. 2nd.*—No answer from the Chief Justice, which is like him, but surely very wrong in such a case. The lunch bell! I have been off work, playing patience and weeding all morning. Yesterday and the day before I drafted eleven and revised nine pages of Chapter v., and the truth is, I was extinct by lunch-time, and played patience sourly the rest of the day.

To-morrow or next day I hope to go in again and win. Lunch 2nd Bell.

*Dec. 2nd, afternoon.*—I have kept up the idleness; blew on the pipe to Belle's piano; then had a ride in the forest all by my nainsel; back and piped again, and now dinner nearing. Take up this sheet with nothing to say. The weird figure of Faauma is in the room washing my windows, in a black lavalava (kilt) with a red handkerchief hanging from round her neck between her breasts; not another stitch; her hair close cropped and oiled; when she first came here she was an angelic little stripling, but she is now in full flower—or half-flower—and grows buxom. As I write, I hear her wet cloth moving and grunting with some industry; for I had a word this day with her husband on the matter of work and meal-time, when she is always late. And she has a vague reverence for Papa, as she and her enormous husband address me when anything is wrong. Her husband is Lafaele, sometimes called the archangel, of whom I have writ you often. Rest of our household, Talolo, cook; Pulu, kitchen boy, good, steady, industrious lads; Henry, back again from Savaii, where his love affair seems not to have prospered, with what looks like a spear-wound in the back of his head, of which Mr. Reticence says nothing; Simi, Manuele, and two other labourers outdoors. Lafaele is provost of the live-stock, whereof now, three milk-cows, one bull-calf, one heifer, Jack, Macfarlane, the mare, Harold, Tifaga Jack, Donald and Edinburgh—seven horses—O, and the stallion—eight horses; five cattle; total, if my arithmetic

be correct, thirteen head of beasts; I don't know how the pigs stand, or the ducks, or the chickens; but we get a good many eggs, and now and again a duckling or a chickling for the table; the pigs are more solemn, and appear only on birthdays and sich.

*Monday, Dec.* 7.—On Friday morning about eleven 1500 cacao seeds arrived, and we set to and toiled from twelve that day to six, and went to bed pretty tired. Next day I got about an hour and a half at my History, and was at it again by 8.10, and except an hour for lunch kept at it till four P.M. Yesterday, I did some History in the morning, and slept most of the afternoon; and to-day, being still averse from physical labour, and the mail drawing nigh, drew out of the squad, and finished for press the fifth chapter of my History; fifty-nine pages in one month; which (you will allow me to say) is a devil of a large order; it means at least 177 pages of writing; 89,000 words! and hours going to and fro among my notes. However, this is the way it has to be done; the job must be done fast, or it is of no use. And it is a curious yarn. Honestly, I think people should be amused and convinced, if they could be at the pains to look at such a damned outlandish piece of machinery, which of course they won't. And much I care.

When I was filling baskets all Saturday, in my dull mulish way, perhaps the slowest worker there, surely the most particular, and the only one that never looked up or knocked off, I could not but think I should have been sent on exhibition as an example to young literary men. Here is how to

learn to write, might be the motto. You should have seen us; the verandah was like an Irish bog; our hands and faces were bedaubed with soil; and Faauma was supposed to have struck the right note when she remarked (*à propos* of nothing), 'Too much *eleele* (soil) for me!' The cacao (you must understand) has to be planted at first in baskets of plaited cocoa-leaf. From four to ten natives were plaiting these in the wood-shed. Four boys were digging up soil and bringing it by the boxful to the verandah. Lloyd and I and Belle, and sometimes S. (who came to bear a hand), were filling the baskets, removing stones and lumps of clay; Austin and Faauma carried them when full to Fanny, who planted a seed in each, and then set them, packed close, in the corners of the verandah. From twelve on Friday till five P.M. on Saturday we planted the first 1500, and more than 700 of a second lot. You cannot dream how filthy we were, and we were all properly tired. They are all at it again to-day, bar Belle and me, not required, and glad to be out of it. The Chief Justice has not yet replied, and I have news that he received my letter. What a man!

I have gone crazy over Bourget's *Sensations d'Italie*; hence the enclosed dedication,[1] a mere cry of gratitude for the best fun I've had over a new book this ever so!

[1] For the volume *Across the Plains*.

## To Fred Orr

The following is in answer to an application for an autograph from a young gentleman in the United States:—

*Vailima, Upolu, Samoa, November 28th,* 1891

DEAR SIR,—Your obliging communication is to hand. I am glad to find that you have read some of my books, and to see that you spell my name right. This is a point (for some reason) of great difficulty; and I believe that a gentleman who can spell Stevenson with a v at sixteen, should have a show for the Presidency before fifty. By that time

I, nearer to the wayside inn,

predict that you will have outgrown your taste for autographs, but perhaps your son may have inherited the collection, and on the morning of the great day will recall my prophecy to your mind. And in the papers of 1921 (say) this letter may arouse a smile.

Whatever you do, read something else besides novels and newspapers; the first are good enough when they are good; the second, at their best, are worth nothing. Read great books of literature and history; try to understand the Roman Empire and the Middle Ages; be sure you do not understand when you dislike them; condemnation is non-comprehension. And if you know something of these two periods, you will know a little more about to-day, and may be a good President.

I send you my best wishes, and am yours,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON,
*Author of a vast quantity of little books*

## To E. L. Burlingame

The next letter announces to his New York publishers the beginning of his volume on the troubles of Samoa, *A Footnote to History.*

[*Vailima, December* 1891]

MY DEAR BURLINGAME,—The end of *The Wrecker* having but just come in, you will, I dare say, be appalled to receive three (possibly four) chapters of a new book of the least attractive sort; a history of nowhere in a corner, or no time to mention, running to a volume! Well, it may very likely be an illusion; it is very likely no one could possibly wish to read it, but I wish to publish it. If you don't cotton to the idea, kindly set it up at my expense, and let me know your terms for publishing. The great affair to me is to have per return (if it might be) four or five—better say half a dozen—sets of the roughest proofs that can be drawn. There are a good many men here whom I want to read the blessed thing, and not one would have the energy to read MS. At the same time, if you care to glance at it, and have the time, I should be very glad of your opinion as to whether I have made any step at all towards possibly inducing folk at home to read matter so extraneous and outlandish. I become heavy and owlish; years sit upon me; it begins to seem to me to be a man's business to leave off his damnable faces and say his say. Else I could have made it pungent and light and lively. In considering, kindly forget that I am R. L. S.; think of the four chapters as a book you are reading, by an inhabitant of our 'lovely but fatil'

islands; and see if it could possibly amuse the hebetated public. I have to publish anyway, you understand; I have a purpose beyond; I am concerned for some of the parties to this quarrel. What I want to hear is from curiosity; what I want you to judge of is what we are to do with the book in a business sense. To me it is not business at all; I had meant originally to lay all the profits to the credit of Samoa; when it comes to the pinch of writing, I judge this unfair—I give too much—and I mean to keep (if there be any profit at all) one-half for the artisan; the rest I shall hold over to give to the Samoans *for that which I choose and against work done.* I think I have never heard of greater insolence than to attempt such a subject; yet the tale is so strange and mixed, and the people so oddly characteredabove all, the whites—and the high note of the hurricane and the warships is so well prepared to take popular interest, and the latter part is so directly in the day's movement, that I am not without hope but some may read it; and if they don't, a murrain on them! Here is, for the first time, a tale of Greeks—Homeric Greeks—mingled with moderns, and all true; Odysseus alongside of Rajah Brooke, *proportion gardée*; and all true. Here is for the first time since the Greeks (that I remember) the history of a handful of men, where all know each other in the eyes, and live close in a few acres, narrated at length, and with the seriousness of history. Talk of the modern novel; here is a modern history. And if I had the misfortune to found a school, the legitimate historian might lie down and die, for he

could never overtake his material. Here is a little tale that has not 'caret'-ed its 'vates'; 'sacer' is another point.

R. L. S.

## To Henry James

Mr. Henry James was in the habit of sending out for Stevenson's reading books that seemed likely to interest him, and among the last had been M. Paul Bourget's *Sensations d'Italie*.

*December 7th*, 1891

MY DEAR HENRY JAMES,—Thanks for yours; your former letter was lost; so it appears was my long and masterly treatise on the *Tragic Muse*. I remember sending it very well, and there went by the same mail a long and masterly tractate to Gosse about his daddy's life, for which I have been long expecting an acknowledgment, and which is plainly gone to the bottom with the other. If you see Gosse, please mention it. These gems of criticism are now lost literature, like the tomes of Alexandria. I could not do 'em again. And I must ask you to be content with a dull head, a weary hand, and short commons, for to-day, as I am physically tired with hard work of every kind, the labours of the planter and the author both piled upon me mountain deep. I am delighted beyond expression by Bourget's book: he has phrases which affect me almost like Montaigne; I had read ere this a masterly essay of his on Pascal; this book does it; I write for all his essays by this mail, and shall try to meet him when I come to Europe. The proposal is to pass a summer in France, I think in Royat, where the faithful could

come and visit me; they are now not many. I expect Henry James to come and break a crust or two with us. I believe it will be only my wife and myself; and she will go over to England, but not I, or possibly incog. to Southampton, and then to Boscombe to see poor Lady Shelley. I am writing —trying to write in a Babel fit for the bottomless pit; my wife, her daughter, her grandson and my mother, all shrieking at each other round the house—not in war, thank God! but the din is ultra martial, and the note of Lloyd joins in occasionally, and the cause of this to-do is simply cacao, whereof chocolate comes. You may drink of our chocolate perhaps in five or six years from now, and not know it. It makes a fine bustle, and gives us some hard work, out of which I have slunk for to-day.

I have a story coming out: God knows when or how; it answers to the name of the *Beach of Falesá*, and I think well of it. I was delighted with the *Tragic Muse*; I thought the Muse herself one of your best works; I was delighted also to hear of the success of your piece, as you know I am a dam failure,[1] and might have dined with the dinner club that Daudet and these parties frequented.

*Next day.*—I have just been breakfasting at Baiae and Brindisi, and the charm of Bourget hag-rides me. I wonder if this exquisite fellow, all made of fiddle-strings and scent and intelligence, could bear any of my bald prose. If you think he could, ask Colvin to send him a copy of these last essays of mine when they appear; and tell Bourget they go to

[1] *i.e.* On the stage.

him from a South Sea Island as literal homage. I have read no new book for years that gave me the same literary thrill as his *Sensations d'Italie*. If (as I imagine) my cut-and-dry literature would be death to him, and worse than death—journalism—be silent on the point. For I have a great curiosity to know him, and if he doesn't know my work, I shall have the better chance of making his acquaintance. I read *The Pupil* the other day with great joy; your little boy is admirable; why is there no little boy like that unless he hails from the Great Republic?

Here I broke off, and wrote Bourget a dedication; no use resisting; it's a love affair. O, he's exquisite, I bless you for the gift of him. I have really enjoyed this book as I—almost as I—used to enjoy books when I was going twenty—twenty-three; and these are the years for reading!

R. L. S.

## To Sidney Colvin

[*Vailima*] *Tuesday, Dec.* 1891

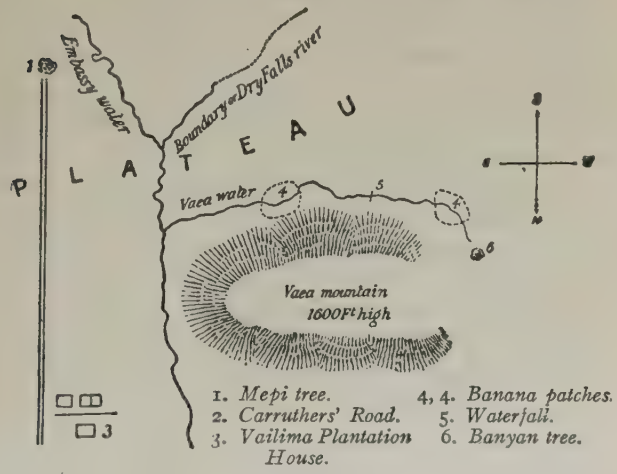
SIR,—I have the honour to report further explorations of the course of the river Vaea, with accompanying sketch plan. The party under my command consisted of one horse, and was extremely insubordinate and mutinous, owing to not being used to go into the bush, and being half-broken anyway—and that the wrong half. The route indicated for my party was up the bed of the so-called river Vaea, which I accordingly followed to a distance of perhaps

two or three furlongs eastward from the house of Vailima, where the stream being quite dry, the bush thick, and the ground very difficult, I decided to leave the main body of the force under my command tied to a tree, and push on myself with the point of the advance guard, consisting of one man. The valley had become very narrow and airless; foliage close shut above; dry bed of the stream much excavated, so that I passed under fallen trees without stooping. Suddenly it turned sharply to the north, at right angles to its former direction; I heard living water, and came in view of a tall face of rock and the stream spraying down it; it might have been climbed, but it would have been dangerous, and I had to make my way up the steep earth banks, where there is nowhere any footing for man, only for trees, which made the rounds of my ladder. I was near the top of this climb, which was very hot and steep, and the pulses were buzzing all over my body, when I made sure there was one external sound in my ears, and paused to listen. No mistake; a sound of a mill-wheel thundering, I thought, close by, yet below me, a huge mill-wheel, yet not going steadily, but with a *schottische* movement, and at each fresh impetus shaking the mountain. There, where I was, I just put down the sound to the mystery of the bush; where no sound now surprises me—and any sound alarms; I only thought it would give Jack a fine fright, down where he stood tied to a tree by himself, and he was badly enough scared when I left him. The good folks at home identified it; it was a sharp earthquake.

At the top of the climb I made my way again to the watercourse; it is here running steady and pretty full; strange these intermittencies—and just a little below the main stream is quite dry, and all the original brook has gone down some lava gallery of the mountain—and just a little further below, it begins picking up from the left hand in little boggy tributaries, and in the inside of a hundred yards has grown a brook again.[1] The general course of the brook was, I guess, S.E.; the valley still very deep and whelmed in wood. It seemed a swindle to have made so sheer a climb and still find yourself at the bottom of a well. But gradually the thing seemed to shallow, the trees to seem poorer and smaller; I could see more and more of the silver sprinkles of sky among the foliage, instead of the sombre piling up of tree behind tree. And here I had two scares—first, away up on my right hand I heard a bull low; I think it was a bull from the quality of the low, which was singularly songful and beautiful; the bulls belong to me, but how did I know that the bull was

[1] As to this peculiar intermittency of the Samoan streams, full in their upper course, but below in many places dry or lost, compare the late Lord Pembroke's *South Sea Bubbles*, p. 212:—'One odd thing connected with these ravines is the fact that the higher you go the more water you find. Unlike the Thames, which begins, I believe, in half a mile of dusty lane, and expands in its brimming breadth as it approaches the sea, a Samoan stream begins in bubbling plenty and ends in utter drought a mile or two from the salt water. Gradually as you ascend you become more and more hopeful; moist patches of sand appear here and there, then tiny pools that a fallen leaf might cover, then larger ones with little thread-like runs of water between them; larger and larger, till at last you reach some hard ledge of trap, over which a glorious stream gurgles and splashes into a pool ample enough for the bath of an elephant.'

aware of that? and my advance guard not being at all properly armed, we advanced with great precaution until I was satisfied that I was passing eastward of the enemy. It was during this period that a pool of the river suddenly boiled up in my face in




1. *Mepi tree.*
2. *Carruthers' Road.*
3. *Vailima Plantation House.*
4, 4. *Banana patches.*
5. *Waterfall.*
6. *Banyan tree.*

a little fountain. It was in a very dreary, marshy part among dilapidated trees that you see through holes in the trunks of; and if any kind of beast or elf or devil had come out of that sudden silver ebullition, I declare I do not think I should have been surprised. It was perhaps a thing as curious—a fish, with which these head waters of the stream are alive. They are some of them as long as my finger, should be easily caught in these shallows, and some day I'll have a dish of them.

Very soon after I came to where the stream collects in another banana swamp, with the bananas bearing well. Beyond, the course is again quite dry; it mounts with a sharp turn a very steep face of the mountain, and then stops abruptly at the lip of a plateau, I suppose the top of Vaea mountain: plainly no more springs here—there was no smallest furrow of a watercourse beyond—and my task might be said to be accomplished. But such is the animated spirit in the service that the whole advance guard expressed a sentiment of disappointment that an exploration, so far successfully conducted, should come to a stop in the most promising view of fresh successes. And though unprovided either with compass or cutlass, it was determined to push some way along the plateau, marking our direction by the laborious process of bending down, sitting upon, and thus breaking the wild cocoanut trees. This was the less regretted by all from a delightful discovery made of a huge banyan growing here in the bush, with flying-buttressed flying buttresses, and huge arcs of trunk hanging high overhead and trailing down new complications of root. I climbed some way up what seemed the original beginning; it was easier to climb than a ship's rigging, even rattled; everywhere there was foot-hold and hand-hold. It was judged wise to return and rally the main body, who had now been left alone for perhaps forty minutes in the bush.

The return was effected in good order, but unhappily I only arrived (like so many other explorers) to find my main body or rear-guard in a condition of

mutiny; the work, it is to be supposed, of terror. It is right I should tell you the Vaea has a bad name; an *aitu fafine*—female devil of the woods—succubus—haunting it, and doubtless Jack had heard of her; perhaps, during my absence, saw her; lucky Jack! Anyway, he was neither to hold nor to bind, and finally, after nearly smashing me by accident, and from mere scare and insubordination several times, deliberately set in to kill me; but poor Jack! the tree he selected for that purpose was a banana! I jumped off and gave him the heavy end of my whip over the buttocks! Then I took and talked in his ear in various voices; you should have heard my alto—it was a dreadful, devilish note—I *knew* Jack *knew* it was an *aitu*. Then I mounted him again, and he carried me fairly steadily. He'll learn yet. He has to learn to trust absolutely to his rider; till he does, the risk is always great in thick bush, where a fellow must try different passages, and put back and forward, and pick his way by hair's-breadths.

The expedition returned to Vailima in time to receive the visit of the R. C. Bishop. He is a superior man, much above the average of priests.

*Thursday.*—Yesterday the same expedition set forth to the southward by what is known as Carruthers' Road. At a fallen tree which completely blocks the way, the main body was as before left behind, and the advance guard of one now proceeded with the exploration. At the great tree known as *Mepi Tree*, after Maben the surveyor, the expedition struck forty yards due west till it struck the top of a steep bank which it descended. The whole bottom

of the ravine is filled with sharp lava blocks quite unrolled and very difficult and dangerous to walk among; no water in the course, scarce any sign of water. And yet surely water must have made this bold cutting in the plateau. And if so, why is the lava sharp? My science gave out; but I could not but think it ominous and volcanic. The course of the stream was tortuous, but with a resultant direction a little by west of north; the sides the whole way exceeding steep, the expedition buried under fathoms of foliage. Presently water appeared in the bottom, a good quantity; perhaps thirty or forty cubic feet, with pools and waterfalls. A tree that stands all along the banks here must be very fond of water; its roots lie close-packed down the stream, like hanks of guts, so as to make often a corrugated walk, each root ending in a blunt tuft of filaments, plainly to drink water. Twice there came in small tributaries from the left or western side—the whole plateau having a smartish inclination to the east; one of the tributaries in a handsome little web of silver hanging in the forest. Twice I was startled by birds; one that barked like a dog; another that whistled loud ploughman's signals, so that I vow I was thrilled, and thought I had fallen among runaway blacks, and regretted my cutlass which I had lost and left behind while taking bearings. A good many fishes in the brook, and many cray-fish; one of the last with a queer glow-worm head. Like all our brooks, the water is pure as air, and runs over red stones like rubies. The foliage along both banks very thick and high, the place close, the walking

exceedingly laborious. By the time the expedition reached the fork, it was felt exceedingly questionable whether the *morale* of the force were sufficiently good to undertake more extended operations. A halt was called, the men refreshed with water and a bath, and it was decided at a drumhead council of war to continue the descent of the Embassy Water straight for Vailima, whither the expedition returned, in rather poor condition, and wet to the waist, about 4 P.M.

Thus in two days the two main watercourses of this country have been pretty thoroughly explored, and I conceive my instructions fully carried out. The main body of the second expedition was brought back by another officer despatched for that purpose from Vailima. Casualties: one horse wounded; one man bruised; no deaths—as yet, but the bruised man feels to-day as if his case was mighty serious.

*Dec.* 25, '91.—Your note with a very despicable bulletin of health arrived only yesterday, the mail being a day behind. It contained also the excellent Times article, which was a sight for sore eyes. I am still *taboo*; the blessed Germans will have none of me; and I only hope they may enjoy the Times article. 'Tis my revenge! I wish you had sent the letter too, as I have no copy, and do not even know what I wrote the last day, with a bad headache, and the mail going out. However, it must have been about right, for the Times article was in the spirit I wished to arouse. I hope we can get rid of the man before it is too late. He has set the natives to war; but the natives, by God's blessing, do not want to fight, and I think it will fizzle out—no thanks to the

man who tried to start it. But I did not mean to drift into these politics; rather to tell you what I have done since I last wrote.

Well, I worked away at my *History* for a while, and only got one chapter done; no doubt this spate of work is pretty low now, and will be soon dry; but, God bless you, what a lot I have accomplished; *Wrecker* done, *Beach of Falesá* done, half the *History*: *c'est étonnant.* (I hear from Burlingame, by the way, that he likes the end of the *Wrecker*; 'tis certainly a violent, dark yarn with interesting, plain turns of human nature), then Lloyd and I went down to live in Haggard's rooms, where Fanny presently joined us. Haggard's rooms are in a strange old building—old for Samoa, and has the effect of the antique like some strange monastery; I would tell you more of it, but I think I'm going to use it in a tale. The annexe close by had its door sealed; poor Dowdney lost at sea in a schooner. The place is haunted. The vast empty sheds, the empty store, the airless, hot, long, low rooms, the claps of wind that set everything flying—a strange uncanny house to spend Christmas in.

*Jan. 1st*, '92.—For a day or two I have sat close and wrought hard at the *History*, and two more chapters are all but done. About thirty pages should go by this mail, which is not what should be, but all I could overtake. Will any one ever read it? I fancy not; people don't read history for reading, but for education and display—and who desires education in the history of Samoa, with no population, no past, no future, or the exploits of Mataafa, Malie-

toa, and Consul Knappe? Colkitto and Galasp are a trifle to it. Well, it can't be helped, and it must be done, and, better or worse, it's capital fun. There are two to whom I have not been kind—German Consul Becker and English Captain Hand, R.N.

On Dec. 30th I rode down with Belle to go to (if you please) the Fancy Ball. When I got to the beach, I found the barometer was below 29°, the wind still in the east and steady, but a huge offensive continent of clouds and vapours forming to leeward. It might be a hurricane; I dared not risk getting caught away from my work, and, leaving Belle, returned at once to Vailima. Next day—yesterday—it was a tearer; we had storm shutters up; I sat in my room and wrote by lamplight—ten pages, if you please, seven of them draft, and some of these compiled from as many as seven different and conflicting authorities, so that was a brave day's work. About two a huge tree fell within sixty paces of our house; a little after, a second went; and we sent out boys with axes and cut down a third, which was too near the house, and buckling like a fishing rod. At dinner we had the front door closed and shuttered, the back door open, the lamp lit. The boys in the cook-house were all out at the cook-house door, where we could see them looking in and smiling. Lauilo and Faauma waited on us with smiles. The excitement was delightful. Some very violent squalls came as we sat there, and every one rejoiced; it was impossible to help it; a soul of putty had to sing. All night it blew; the roof was continually sounding

under missiles; in the morning, the verandahs were half full of branches torn from the forest. There was a last very wild squall about six; the rain, like a thick white smoke, flying past the house in volleys, and as swift, it seemed, as rifle balls; all with a strange, strident hiss, such as I have only heard before at sea, and, indeed, thought to be a marine phenomenon. Since then the wind has been falling with a few squalls, mostly rain. But our road is impassable for horses; we hear a schooner has been wrecked and some native houses blown down in Apia, where Belle is still and must remain a prisoner. Lucky I returned while I could! But the great good is this; much bread-fruit and bananas have been destroyed; if this be general through the islands, famine will be imminent; and *whoever blows the coals, there can be no war*. Do I then prefer a famine to a war? you ask. Not always, but just now. I am sure the natives do not want a war; I am sure a war would benefit no one but the white officials, and I believe we can easily meet the famine—or at least that it can be met. That would give our officials a legitimate opportunity to cover their past errors.

*Jan. 2nd.*—I woke this morning to find the blow quite ended. The heaven was all a mottled grey; even the east quite colourless; the downward slope of the island veiled in wafts of vapour, blue like smoke; not a leaf stirred on the tallest tree; only, three miles away below me on the barrier reef, I could see the individual breakers curl and fall, and hear their conjunct roaring rise, as it still rises at 1 P. M.,

like the roar of a thoroughfare close by. I did a good morning's work, correcting and clarifying my draft, and have now finished for press eight chapters, ninety-one pages, of this piece of journalism. Four more chapters, say fifty pages, remain to be done; I should gain my wager and finish this volume in three months, that is to say, the end should leave me per February mail; I cannot receive it back till the mail of April. Yes, it can be out in time; pray God that it be in time to help.

How do journalists fetch up their drivel? I aim only at clearness and the most obvious finish, positively at no higher degree of merit, not even at brevity—I am sure it could have been all done, with double the time, in two-thirds of the space. And yet it has taken me two months to write 45,500 words; and, be damned to my wicked prowess, I am proud of the exploit! The real journalist must be a man not of brass only, but bronze. Chapter IX. gapes for me, but I shrink on the margin, and go on chattering to you. This last part will be much less offensive (strange to say) to the Germans. It is Becker they will never forgive me for; Knappe I pity and do not dislike; Becker I scorn and abominate. Here is the tableau. I. Elements of Discord: Native. II. Elements of Discord: Foreign. III. The Sorrows of Laupepa. IV. Brandeis. V. The Battle of Matautu. VI. Last Exploits of Becker. VII. The Samoan Camps. VIII. Affairs of Lautii and Fangalii. IX. '*Furor Consularis*.' X. The Hurricane. XI. Stuebel Recluse. XII. The Present Government. I estimate the whole roughly at

70,000 words. Should anybody ever dream of reading it, it would be found amusing. $\frac{70000}{300} = 233$ printed pages; a respectable little five-bob volume, to bloom unread in shop windows. After that, I'll have a spank at fiction. And rest? I shall rest in the grave, or when I come to Italy. If only the public will continue to support me! I lost my chance not dying; there seems blooming little fear of it now. I worked close on five hours this morning; the day before, close on nine; and unless I finish myself off with this letter, I'll have another hour and a half, or *aiblins twa*, before dinner. Poor man, how you must envy me, as you hear of these orgies of work, and you scarce able for a letter. But Lord, Colvin, how lucky the situations are not reversed, for I have no situation, nor am fit for any. Life is a steigh brae. Here, have at Knappe, and no more clavers!

*Jan. 3rd.*—There was never any man had so many irons in the fire, except Jim Pinkerton.[1] I forgot to mention I have the most gallant suggestion from Lang, with an offer of MS. authorities, which turns my brain. It's all about the throne of Poland and buried treasure in the Mackay country, and Alan Breck can figure there in glory.

Yesterday, J. and I set off to Blacklock's (American Consul) who lives not far from that little village I have so often mentioned as lying between us and Apia. I had some questions to ask him for my *History*; thence we must proceed to Vailele, where

[1] In *The Wrecker*. As to the story thus suggested by Mr. Andrew Lang, see vol. iv.

I had also to cross-examine the plantation manager about the battle there. We went by a track I had never before followed down the hill to Vaisigano, which flows here in a deep valley, and was unusually full, so that the horses trembled in the ford. The whole bottom of the valley is full of various streams posting between strips of forest with a brave sound of waters. In one place we had a glimpse of a fall some way higher up, and then sparkling in sunlight in the midst of the green valley. Then up by a winding path scarce accessible to a horse for steepness, to the other side, and the open cocoanut glades of the plantation. Here we rode fast, did a mighty satisfactory afternoon's work at the plantation house, and still faster back. On the return Jack fell with me, but got up again; when I felt him recovering I gave him his head, and he shoved his foot through the rein; I got him by the bit however, and all was well; he had mud over all his face, but his knees were not broken. We were scarce home when the rain began again; that was luck. It is pouring now in torrents; we are in the height of the bad season. Lloyd leaves along with this letter on a change to San Francisco; he had much need of it, but I think this will brace him up. I am, as you see, a tower of strength. I can remember riding not so far and not near so fast when I first came to Samoa, and being shattered next day with fatigue; now I could not tell I have done anything: have re-handled my battle of Fangalii according to yesterday's information—four pages rewritten; and written already some half-dozen pages of letters.

I observe with disgust that while of yore, when I own I was guilty, you never spared me abuse—but now, when I am so virtuous, where is the praise? Do admit that I have become an excellent letter-writer—at least to you, and that your ingratitude is imbecile.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

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